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A Diſcourſe of Engliſh Poetrie.

Together, with the Authors iudgment, touching the reformation of our Engliſh Verſe.

By VVilliam VVebbe Graduate.



Imprinted at London, by Iohn Charlewood for Robert VValley 1586.

A discourse of English poetrie. 1586

William Webbe, Edward Arber

✓. 15630



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English Reprints.

WILLIAM WEBBE, GRADUATE.

A DISCOURSE

OF

ENGLISH POETRIE.

1586.

CAREFULLY EDITED BY

EDWARD ARBER,
Associate, King's College, London, F.R.G.S., &c.

LONDON:

5 QUEEN SQUARE, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.

Ent. Stat. Hall. 1 December 1871. *[All rights reserved.*

15. b. 30

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NOTES

of

WILLIAM WEBBE.

* *Probable or approximate dates.*

Very little is known of the Author of this work. The suggestion that he was the Wilkam Webbe, M.A., one of the joint Authors of a topographical book *The Vale Royal*, 1648, fol., is quite anachronistic.

Messrs. Cooper, in *Athenæ Cantabrigienses, ii.* 12. *Ed.* 1861, state that our Author "was a graduate of this University, but we have no means of determining his college. One of this name, who was of St. John's College, was B.A. 1572-3 [the same year as Spenser], as was another who was of Catharine Hall in 1581-2. His place of residence is unknown, although it may perhaps be inferred that it was in or near the county of Suffolk. We have no information as to his position in life, or the time or place of his death. He was evidently a man of superior intellect and no mean attainments." [Our Author apparently witnessed *Tancred and Gismund* in 1568, and being evidently acquainted with Gabriel Harvey and Spenser (who left Cambridge in 1578), must be the earlier graduate of the above two Webbes.]

1568. *Tancred and Gismund*, written by five members of the Inner Temple, the first letters of whose names are attached to the several acts, viz., Rod. Staff; Hen. No[well?]; G. All; Ch. Hat[ton?]; and R. W[ilmot]: is 'curiously acted in view of her Maiesty, by whom it was then princely accepted.'

Webbe appears to have been present at the representation: see **1591**. Mr. J. P. Collier in his edition of 'Dodsley's *Old Plays*,' i. 153, prints from a MS. what is apparently a portion of this Tragedy as it was then acted, written in alternate rhymes. He also states in his *Hist. of Dram. Poet.* that it 'is the earliest English play extant, the plot of which is known to be derived from an Italian novel." *iii.* 13. *Ed.* 1831.

***1572-3.** Our Author takes his B.A. at Cambridge.

1582. Nov. 28. Gabriel Poyntz presented Robert Wilmott, clerk to the Rectory of North Okendon, Essex: 18 miles from London. *Newcourt Repertorium, ii.* 447. *Ed.* 1710.

Flemyngs is a large manor house in Essex in the parish of Runwell, in the hundred of Chelmsford; from which town it is ten miles distant, and about twenty-nine miles from London. 'This house commands extensive views of some parts of the county and of Kent, including more than thirty parish churches.'

Edward Sulyard succeeded, on the death of his father Eustace in 1546, to Flemyngs and other possessions. He had two sons, Edward and Thomas, and a daughter named Elizabeth. He was knighted on 23 July 1603 at Whitehall by James I, before his coronation: and died in June 1610. Of his two sons, Edward died without issue; Thomas, *b.* 1573, was knighted, and *d.* March 1634; leaving a son Edward, who *d.* 7 Nov. 1692 without issue, 'the last of the house and family.' See *W. Berry, County Gen. Essex*, 64. T. Wright, *Hist. of Essex, i.* 142, 143. *Ed.* 1831. J. P[hilipot] *Knts. Batch. made by James I.* 1660.

***1583** or **4.** Webbe appears to have been at this time private tutor to Mr Sulyard's two sons, for he presented his MS. translation (now lost) of the *Georgics* to Mr. Sulyard: see *pp.* 55 and 16.

1585. DEC. 2. The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's appoint Robert Wilmott, M.A., to the Vicarage of Horndon on the Hill, twenty-four miles from London, and a few miles from Flemyngs, where his friend Webbe was a private tutor. *Newcourt, idem. ii.* 343.

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1586. Of 'the pregnant ympes of right excellent hope,' Thomas Sulyard was about thirteen years old, and his brother Edward was older than him.

W. Webbe writes the present work in the summer evenings.

SEPT. 4. It is thus registered for publication.

"Robt. Walley
John Charlewood, Rd. of them, for printinge A Discourse of englishe poetrye vjd."

J. P. Collier, Extr. of Stat. Co.'s Regrs. ii., 215. *Ed* 1849.

1587. FEB. 5. Margaret, the mother of Mr. Sulyard died. She is buried at Runwell.

1588. Warton quotes "a small black-lettered tract entitled *The Touch-stone of Wittes*, chiefly compiled, with some slender additions, from William Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetrie*, written by Edward Hake, and printed at London by Edmund Bollifant." *p.* 804. *Ed.* 1870.

Our Author—his pupils growing to manhood—then appears to have gone, possibly also in the same capacity of private tutor into the family of Henry Grey, Esquire [created Baron Grey of Groby, 21 July 1603: *d.* 1614] at Pirgo, in the parish of Havering atte Bower, Essex; fifteen miles from London. Dugdale states that the first husband of one of the daughters of this Henry Grey, Esquire, was a *William Sulyard*, Esquire. *Baron. i.* 722. *Ed.* 1675. From this old Palace of the Queens of England Webbe wrote the following letter to Wilmott, which is reprinted in the revised edition of *Tancred and Gismund* published in 1592: of which there are copies in the Bodleian, and at Bridgewater House, and an imperfect one in the British Museum (C. 34, e. 44).

1591. AUG. 8. *To his frend R. W.* Master *R. VV.* looke not now for the tearmes of an intreator, I wil beg no longer, and for your promises, I wil refuse them as bad paiment: neither can I be satisfied with any thing, but a peremptorie performance of an old intention of yours, the publishing I meane of those wast papers (as it pleaseth you to cal them, but as I esteem them, a most exquisite inuention) of *Gismunds* Tragedie. Thinke not to shift me off with longer delayes, nor alledge more excuses to get further respite, least I arrest you with my *Actum est*, and commence such a Sute of vnkindenesse against you, as when the case shall be scand before the Iudges of courtesie, the court will crie out of your immoderat modestie. And thus much I tel you before, you shal not be able to wage against me in the charges growing vpon this action, especially, if the worshipful company of the Inner temple gentlemen patronize my cause, as vndoubtedly they wil, yea, and rather plead partially for me then let my cause miscary, because themselues are parties. The tragedie was by them most pithely framed, and no lesse curiously acted in view of her Maiesty, by whom it was then as princely accepted, as of the whole honorable audience notably applauded: yea, and of al men generally desired, as a work, either in statelines of shew, depth of conceit, or true ornaments of poeticall arte, inferior to none of the best in that kinde: no, were the Roman *Seneca* the censurer. The braue youths that then (to their high praises) so feelingly performed the same in action, did shortly after lay vp the booke vnregarded, or perhaps let it run abroade (as many parentes doe their children once past dandling) not respecting so much what hard fortune might befall it being out of their fingers, as how their heroical wits might againe be quickly conceiued with new inuentions of like worthines, wherof they haue been euer since wonderfull fertill. But this orphan of theirs (for he wandreth as it were fatherlesse,) hath notwithstanding, by the rare and bewtiful perfections appearing in him, hetherto neuer wanted great

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fauourers, and louing preseruers. Among whom I cannot sufficiently commend your more then charitable zeale, and scholerly compassion towards him, that haue not only rescued and defended him from the deuouring iawes of obliuion, but vouchsafed also to apparrel him in a new sute at your own charges, wherein he may again more boldly come abroad, and by your permission returne to his olde parents, clothed perhaps not in richer or more costly furniture than it went from them, but in handsomnes and fashion more answerable to these times, wherein fashions are so often altered. Let one word suffice for your encouragement herein: namely, your commendable pains in disrobing him of his antike curiositie, and adorning him with the approoued guise of our stateliest Englishe termes (not diminishing, but augmenting his artificiall colours of absolute poesie, deriued from his first parents) cannot but bee grateful to most mens appetites, who vpon our experience we know highly to esteem such lofty measures of sententiously composed Tragedies.

How much you shal make me, and the rest of your priuate frends beholding vnto you, I list not to discourse: and therefore grounding vpon these alledged reasons, that the suppressing of this Tragedie, so worthy for ye presse, were no other thing then wilfully to defraud your selfe of an vniuersall thank, your frends of their expectations, and sweete G. of a famous eternitie. I will cease to doubt of any other pretence to cloake your bashfulnesse, hoping to read it in print (which lately lay neglected amongst your papers) at our next appointed meeting.

I bid you heartely farewell. From Pyrgo in Essex, August the eight, 1591. *Tuus fide et facultate.* GUIL. WEBBE.

It may also be noted that Wilmott dedicated this revised tragedy to two Essex ladies: one of whom was Lady Anne Grey, the daughter of Lord Windsor, and the wife of the above-mentioned Henry Grey, Esquire of Pirgo.

That the above R. Wilmott, Clergyman, is the same as the Reviser of the play appears from the following passage in his Preface.

"Hereupon I have indured some conflicts between reason and judgement, whether it were convenient for the commonwealth. and the *indecorum* of my calling (as some think it) that the memory of *Tancred's* Tragedy should be again by my means revised, which the oftner I read over, and the more I considered thereon, the sooner I was won to consent thereunto: calling to mind that neither the thrice reverend and learned father, M. Beza, was ashamed in his younger years to send abroad, in his own name, his Tragedy of *Abraham*, nor that rare Scot (the scholar of our age) *Buchanan*, his most pathetical *Jeptha*." '*Dodsley's Old Plays*.' *ii.* 165. Ed. by J. P. Collier, 1825.

If the identity may be considered as established, Wilmott the Poet lived on till 1619: when he was succeeded on his death by W. Jackson, in the Rectory of North Okendon. *Newcourt, idem. ii.* 447.

No later information concerning W. Webbe than the above letter, has yet been recovered.

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A Diſcourſe of Engliſh Poetrie

INTRODUCTION.

Apart from the exceſſive rarity of this work, two copies of it only being known; it deſerves permanent republication as a good example of the beſt form of Eſſay Writing of its time; and as one of the ſeries of Poetical Criticiſms before the advent of Shakeſpeare as a writer, the ſtudy of which is ſo eſſential to a right underſtanding of our beſt Verſe.

Although Poetry is the moſt ethereal part of Thought and Expreſſion; though Poets muſt be born and cannot be made: yet is there an art of Poeſy; ſet forth long ago by Horace but varying with differing languages and countries, and even with different ages in the life of the ſame country. In our tongue—Milton only excepted—there is nothing approaching, either in the average merit of the Journeymen or the ſuperlative excellence of the few Maſter-Craftſmen, the Poeſy of the Elizabethan age. Hence the value of theſe early Poetical Criticiſms. Their diſcuſſion of principles is moſt helpful to all readers in the diſcernment of the ſubtle beauties of the numberleſs poems of that era: while for thoſe who can, and who will; they will be found ſingularly ſuggeſtive in the training of their own Power of Song, for the inſtruction and delight of this and future generations.

A Cambridge graduate; the private tutor, for ſome two or three years paſt, to Edward and Thomas Sul-

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yard, the ſons of Edward Sulyard Eſquire, of Flemyngs, ſituated in Eſſex, ſome thirty miles diſtant from London. our Author gave his leiſure hours to the ſtudy of Latin and Engliſh poetry.

He had acquainted himſelf with our older Poets, and with the contemporary verſe: and, thinking for himſelf, he endeavoured to ſee exactly what Engliſh poetry actually was, and what it might and ſhould become. Doubtleſs in his walks in the large park ſurrounding the Old Manor Houſe this ſubject often occupied his thoughts, and he ſat down to commit his opinions to the preſs, in the preſence and quietude of a large and fair landſcape ſtretching far away ſouthward beyond the Thames into Kent, diverſified with the ſpires of many churches and the maſts of many paſſing ſhips: and all illuminated with the glow and glory of the ſummer evenings of 1586.

Webbe was as much affected with the 'immoderate modeſty' with which, five years later, he charged Wilmot, as any of the writers of that age. He dreads, at *p.* 55, the unauthorized publication of his verſion of the *Georgics*, and he muſt have been moved deeply by 'the rude multitude of ruſticall Rymers, who will be called Poets' before he ventured to advocate in print 'the reformation of our Engliſh Verſe,' *i.e.*, the abandonment of Rhyme for Metre.

He calls his work 'a ſleight ſomewhat compyled for recreation, in the intermyſſions of my daylie buſineſſe,' yet it is the moſt extenſive piece of Poetical Criticiſm that had hitherto appeared. He had read, for he quotes at *p.* 64, G. Gaſcoigne's *Certayne Notes, &c.*, 1575: alſo *Three proper and wittie, familiar Letters*, by Immerito [Edmund Spenſer] and G[abriel H[arvey] 1580, to which he alludes at *p.* 36. He may have heard of Sir P. Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* [1582], then circulating in manuſcript, or of the young Scotch King's *Reulis and Cautelis of Scottiſh Poeſie*, then being

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publiſhed at Edinburgh. Yet none of theſe is ſo lengthy, nor deals with the ſame extent of ſubject, nor is illuſtrated by original examples, as is this *Diſcourſe*.

Though the book is an honeſt one, faithfully repreſenting the author's robuſt mind; it was written under the ſtrong influence of three works: Aſcham's *Scholemaſter*, 1570; Edwardes' *Paradiſe of Dainty Deviſes*, 1576; and Spenſer's *Shepherdes Calender*, anonymouſly publiſhed, without the author's conſent, by E. K. [*i.e.*, Edward Kirke, as is generally believed] in 1579. He follows Aſcham as to the origin of Rhyme; and alſo in his error as to Simmias Rhodias at *p.* 57, &c. He quotes W. Hunnis' poem at *p.* 66, from the collection of Edwardes. It is alſo Webbe's great merit as a lover and judge of poetry, that he inſtinctively fixes upon the *Shepherdes Calender* (never openly acknowledged by Spenſer in his lifetime) as the revelation of a great poet, as great an Engliſh Poet indeed, as had yet appeared. That Paſtoral Poem gave Webbe a higher reverence for Spenſer than his great Allegory breeds reſpect for him in many, now-a-days.

The facility of Rhyme, at a time when there were many wonderfully facile Rhymers, induced Aſcham, Webbe, and many others to ſeek after a more difficult form of Engliſh verſe. Claſſical feet Webbe himſelf experienced to be a 'troubleſome and vnpleaſant peece of labour,' ſo he ſought after ſomething more adapted to the nature of the language, 'ſome perfect platforme or *Proſodia* of verſifying.' Blank verſe would have ſatisfied him, but he did not recogniſe its merits in Surrey's tranſlation of the *Æneid*. He is, however, warm in his praiſe of Phaer's verſion of that work in hexameters: and gives us three pieces of reformed verſe of his own coinage; two in hexameters, and one in ſapphics.

Finally, Webbe wrote 'theſe fewe leaues' 'to ſtirre

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vppe ſome other of meete abilitie, to beſtowe trauell in this matter.' His wiſh had been anticipated. Already a Maſter Critic was at work—we know not for certainty whether it was George Puttenham, or who elſe—who, beginning to write in 1585, publiſhed in 1589 *The Arte of Engliſh Poeſie*: which is the largeſt and ableſt criticiſm of Engliſh Poeſy that appeared in print, during the reign of Elizabeth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Issues in the Author's lifetime.

I.—*As a ſeparate publication.*

1. 1586. London. 1 vol. 4to. See title on oppoſite page.

Of the two copies known, the one here reprinted is among the Malone books in the Bodleian. The other paſſed from hand to hand at the following ſales: always increaſing in price.

1773. APR. 8. Mr. West's sale, No. 1856, 10s. 6d., to Mr. Pearson.
1778. APR. 22. Mr. Pearson's sale, No. 1888, £3, 5s., to Mr. Stevens.
1800. MAY 19. Mr Stevens' sale, No. 1128, £8, 8s., to the Duke of Roxburghe.
1812. JUNE 2. The Roxburghe sale, No. 3168, £64, to the Marquis of Blandford.

Issues since the Author's death.

I.—*As a ſeparate publication.*

3. 1870. DEC. 1. London. *Engliſh Reprints*: ſee title at 1 vol. 8vo. *p.* 1.

II.—*With other works.*

2. 1815. London. *Ancient Critical Eſſays.* Ed. by J. Haſlewood. *A Diſcourſe of Engliſh Poetrie* occupies Vol. ii., *pp.* 13-95.
2 vols. 4to.

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A Diſcourſe of Engliſh Poetrie.

Together, with the Authors iudgment, touching the reformation of our Engliſh Verſe.

By VVilliam VVebbe
Graduate.



Imprinted at London,
by Iohn Charlewood for
Robert VValley
1586.

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To the right vvorſhip= full, learned, and moſt gentle Gentle- *man, my verie good Master, Ma.*

Edward Suliard, Eſquire. VV. VV. wyſheth his harts deſire.

(·.·)

MAy it pleaſe you Syr, *thys once more to beare with my rudenes, in preſenting vnto your viewe, an other ſlender conceite, of my ſimple capa- city: wherin although I am not able to bring you anie thing, which is meete to detaine you from your more ſerious matters: yet vppon my knowledge of your former courteſy and your fauourable countenaunce towardes all enterpriſes of Learning, I dare make bold to craue your accustomed patience, in turning ouer ſome of theſe fewe leaues, which I ſhall account a greater recompence, then the wryting thereof may deſerue.*

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The firme hope of your wonted gentlenes, not any good lyking of myne owne labour, made me thus preſumptuouſly to craue your worships patronage for my poore booke. A pretty aunſwere is reported by ſome to be made by Appelles *to King* Alexander, *who (in diſport) taking vp one of his penſilles to drawe a line, and asking the Paynters iudgment of his draught,* It is doone *(quoth Apelles)* like a King*: meaning indeede it was drawen as he pleaſed, but was nothing leſſe then good workmanshippe. My ſelfe in like ſort, taking vppon me, to make a draught of* Engliſh Poetry, *and requeſting your worſhyps cenſure of the ſame, you wyll perhaps gyue me thys verdict,* It was doone like a Scholler, *meaning, as I could, but indeede more like to a learner, then one through grounded in Poeticall workmanship.*

Alexander *in drawing his lyne, leaned ſometime too hard, otherwhyle too ſoft, as neuer hauing beene apprentice to the Arte: I in drawing this Poeticall diſcourſe, make it ſome where to ſtraight (leauing out the cheefe colloures and ornaments of Poetry) in an other place to wyde (ſtuffing in peeces little pertinent to true Poetry) as one neuer acquainted wyth the learned Muſes. What then? as he being a king, myght meddle in what Scyence him liſted, though therein hee had no skyll: ſo I beeing a learner, wyll trye my cunning in ſome parts of Learning, though neuer ſo ſimple.*

Nowe, as for my ſaucie preſſing vppon your expected fauor in crauing your iudgment, I beſeech you let me

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make thys excuſe: that whereas true Gentilitie did neuer withdrawe her louing affection from Lady Learning, ſo I am perſwaded, that your worshyppe cannot chuſe, but continue your wonted fauourable benignitie towardes all the indeuourers to learning, of which corporation I doo indeede profeſſe my ſelfe one ſillie member.

For ſith the wryters of all ages, haue ſought as an vndoubted Bulwarke and ſtedfaſt ſauegarde the patronage of Nobilitye, (a ſhielde as ſure as can be to learning) wherin to ſhrowde and ſafelye place their ſeuerall inuentions: why ſhould not I ſeeke ſome harbour for my poore trauell to reste and ſtaye vppon, beeing of it ſelfe vnable to ſhyft the carping cauilles and byting ſcornes of lewde controllers?

And in trueth, where myght I rather chooſe a ſure defence and readye refuge for the ſame, then where I ſee perfecte Gentilitye, and nobleneſſe of minde, to be faſte lyncked with excellencie of learning and affable courteſye? Moreouer, adde thys to the ende of myne excuſe: that I ſende it into your ſight, not as anie wyttie peece of worke that may delight you: but being a ſleight ſomewhat compyled for recreation, in the intermyſſions of my daylie buſineſſe, (euen thys Summer Eueninges) as a token of that earnest and vnquenchable deſyre I haue to shewe my ſelfe duetifull and welwylling towardes you. VVherevnto I am continually enflamed more and more, when I conſider eyther your fauourable freendshyppe vſed towardes

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my ſelfe, or your gentle countenaunce ſhewed to my ſimple trauelles. The one I haue tryed in that homely tranſlation I preſented vnto you: the other I finde true in your curteous putting to my truſt, and dooing me ſo great honeſty and credite, with the charge of theſe toward young Gentlemen your ſonnes.

To which pregnant ympes of right excellent hope, I would I were able, or you myght haue occaſion to make triall of my louing minde: who shoulde well perceyue my ſelfe to remayne vnto them a faythfull and truſty Achates, *euen ſo farre as my wealth my woe, my power or perrill, my penne or witte, my health or lyfe may ſerue to ſerche myne ability.*

Huge heapes of wordes I myght pyle together to trouble you withall: eyther of my ſelfe or of my dooinges, (as ſome doo) or of your worſhyppes commendable vertues (as the moſte doo) But I purpoſely chuſe rather to let paſſe the ſpreading of that worthy fame which you haue euer deſerued, then to runne in ſuſpicion of fawning flattery which I euer abhorred.

Therefore once againe crauing your gentle pardon, and patience in your ouerlooking thys rude Epiſtle: and wyshing more happineſſe then my penne can expreſſe to you and your whole retinewe, I rest.

(.˙.)

Your worſhippes faithfull

Seruant. VV. VV.

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A Preface to the noble *Poets of Englande.*

AMong the innumerable ſortes of Englyſhe Bookes, and infinite ſardles of printed pamphlets, wherewith thys Countrey is peſtered, all ſhoppes ſtuffed, and euery ſtudy furniſhed: the greateſt part I thinke in any one kinde, are ſuch as are either meere Poeticall, or which tende in ſome reſpecte (as either in matter or forme) to Poetry. Of ſuch Bookes therfore, ſith I haue beene one, that haue had a deſire to reade not the feweſt, and becauſe it is an argument, which men of great learning haue no leyſure to handle, or at leaſt hauing to doo with more ſerious matters doo leaſt regarde: If I write ſomething, concerning what I thinke of our Engliſh Poets, or aduenture to ſette downe my ſimple iudgement of Engliſh Poetrie, I truſt the learned Poets will giue me leaue, and vouchſafe my Booke paſſage, as beeing for the rudeneſſe thereof no preiudice to their noble ſtudies, but euen (as my intent is) an *inſtar cotis* to ſtirre vppe ſome other of meete abilitie, to beſtowe trauell in this matter: whereby I thinke wee may not onelie get the meanes which wee yet want, to diſcerne betweene good writers and badde, but perhappes alſo challenge from the rude multitude of ruſticall Rymers, who will be called Poets, the right practiſe and orderly courſe of true Poetry.

It is to be wondred at of all, and is lamented of

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manie, that where as all kinde of good learning, haue aſpyred to royall dignitie and ſtatelie grace in our Engliſh tongue, being not onelie founded, defended, maintained, and enlarged, but alſo purged from faultes, weeded of errours, and polliſhed from barbarouſnes, by men of great authoritie and iudgement: onelie Poetrie hath founde feweſt frends to amende it, thoſe that can, reſeruing theyr ſkyll to themſelues, thoſe that cannot, running headlong vppon it, thinking to garniſh it with their deuiſes, but more corrupting it with fantaſticall errours. VVhat ſhoulde be the cauſe, that our Engliſh ſpeeche in ſome of the wyſeſt mens iudgements, hath neuer attained to anie ſufficient ripenes, nay not ful auoided the reproch of barbarouſnes in Poetry? the rudenes of the Countrey, or baſeneſſe of wytts: or the courſe *Dialect* of the ſpeeche? experience vtterlie diſproueth it to be anie of theſe: what then? ſurelie the canckred enmitie of curious cuſtome: which as it neuer was great freend to any good learning, ſo in this hath it grounded in the moſt, ſuch a negligent perſwaſion of an impoſſibilitie in matching the beſt, that the fineſt witts and moſt diuine heades, haue contented themſelues with a baſe kinde of fingering: rather debaſing theyr faculties, in ſetting forth theyr ſkyll in the courſeſt manner, then for breaking cuſtome, they would labour to adorne their Countrey and aduaunce their ſtyle with the higheſt and moſt learnedſt toppe of true Poetry. The rudenes or vnaptneſſe of our Countrey to be either none or no hinderaunce, if reformation were made accordinglie, the exquiſite excellency in all kindes of good learning nowe flouriſhing among vs, inferiour to none other nation, may ſufficiently declare.

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That there be as ſharpe and quicke wittes in England as euer were among the peereleſſe Grecians, or renowmed Romaines, it were a note of no witte at all in me to deny. And is our ſpeeche ſo courſe, or our phraſe ſo harſhe, that Poetry cannot therein finde a vayne whereby it may appeare like it ſelfe? why ſhould we think ſo baſely of this? rather then of her ſiſter, I meane Rhetoricall *Eloquution*, which as they were by byrth Twyns, by kinde the ſame, by originall of one deſcent: ſo no doubt, as Eloquence hath founde ſuch ſauoures, in the Engliſh tongue, as ſhe frequenteth not any more gladly: ſo would Poetrye if there were the like welcome and entertainment gyuen her by our Engliſh Poets, without queſtion aſpyre to wonderfull perfection, and appeare farre more gorgeous and delectable among vs. Thus much I am bolde to ſay in behalfe of Poetrie, not that I meane to call in queſtion the reuerend and learned workes of Poetrie, written in our tongue by men of rare iudgement, and moſt excellent Poets: but euen as it were by way of ſupplication to the famous and learned Lawreat Maſters of Englande, that they would but conſult one halfe howre with their heauenly Muſe, what credite they might winne to theyr natiue ſpeeche, what enormities they might wipe out of Engliſh Poetry, what a fitte vaine they might frequent, wherein to ſhewe forth their worthie faculties: if Engliſh Poetrie were truely reformed, and ſome perfect platforme or *Profodia* of verſifying were by them ratifyed and ſette downe: eyther in immitation of Greekes and Latines, or where it would ſkant abyde the touch of theyr Rules, the like obſeruations ſelected and eſtabliſhed by the naturall affectation of the ſpeeche. Thus much I ſay, not to perſwade you that

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are the fauourers of Engliſhe Poetry but to mooue it to you: beeing not the firſte that haue thought vpon this matter, but one that by conſent of others, haue taken vppon me to lay it once again in your wayes, if perhaps you may ſtumble vppon it, and chance to looke ſo lowe from your diuine cogitations, when your Muſe mounteth to the ſtarres, and ranſacketh the Spheres of heauen: whereby perhaps you may take compaſſion of noble Poetry, pittifullie mangled and defaced, by rude ſmatterers and barbarous immitatours of your worthy ſtudies. If the motion bee worthy your regard it is enough to mooue it, if not, my wordes woulde ſimply preuaile in perſwading you, and therefore I reſt vppon thys onely requeſt, that of your courteſies, you wyll graunt paſſage, vnder your fauourable corrections, for this my ſimple cenſure of Engliſh Poetry, wherein if you pleaſe to runne it ouer, you ſhall knowe breefely myne opinion of the moſt part of your accuſtomed Poets and particularly, in his place, the lyttle ſomewhat which I haue ſifted out of my weake brayne concerning thys reformed verſifying.

VV: VV:

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A Diſcourſe of Engliſhe Poetrie.

INtending to write ſome diſcourſe of Engliſh Poetrie, I thinke it not amyſſe if I ſpeake ſomething generally of Poetrie, as, what it is, whence it had the beginning, and of what eſtimation it hath alwayes beene and ought to be among al ſorts of people. Poetrie called in Greeke ποετρια, beeing deriued from the Verbe ποίεω, which ſignifieth in Latine *facere*, in Engliſh, to make, may properly be defined, the arte of making: which word as it hath alwaies beene eſpecially vſed of the beſt of our Engliſh Poets, to expreſſe ye very faculty of ſpeaking or wryting Poetically, ſo doth it in deede containe moſt fitly the whole grace and property of the ſame, ye more fullye and effectually then any other Engliſh Verbe. That Poetry is an Arte, (or rather a more excellent thing then can be contayned wythin the compaſſe of Arte) though I neede not ſtande long to prooue, both the witnes of *Horace*, who wrote *de arte Poetica*, and of *Terence*, who calleth it *Artem Muſicam*, and the very naturall property thereof may ſufficiently declare: The beginning of it as appeareth by *Plato*, was of a vertuous and moſt deuout purpoſe,

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who witneſſeth, that by occaſion of meeting of a great company of young men, to ſolemnize ye feaſts which were called *Panegeryca*, and were wont to be celebrated euery fift yeere, there, they that were moſt pregnant in wytt, and indued with great gyfts of wyſedome and knowledge in Muſicke aboue the reſt did vſe commonly to make goodly verſes, meaſured according to the ſweeteſt notes of Muſicke, containing the prayſe of ſome noble vertue, or of immortalitie, or of ſome ſuch thing of greateſt eſtimation: which vnto them ſeemed, ſo heauenly and ioyous a thing, that, thinking ſuch men to be inſpyrde with ſome diuine inſtinct from heauen, they called them *Vates*. So when other among them of the fineſt wits and apteſt capacities beganne in imitation of theſe to frame ditties of lighter matters, and tuning them to the ſtroake of ſome of the pleaſanteſt kind of Muſicke, then began there to grow a diſtinction and great diuerſity betweene makers and makers. Whereby (I take it) beganne thys difference: that they which handled in the audience of the people, graue and neceſſary matters, were called wiſe men or eloquent men, which they meant by *Vates*: and the reſt which ſange of loue matters, or other lighter deuiſes alluring vnto pleaſure and delight, were called *Poetæ* or makers. Thus it appeareth, both Eloquence and Poetrie to haue had their beginning and originall from theſe exerciſes, beeing framed in ſuch ſweete meaſure of ſentences and pleaſant harmonie called Ρἰθμος, which is an apt compoſition of wordes or clauſes, drawing as it were by force ye hearers eares euen whether ſoeuer it lyſteth: that *Plato* affirmeth therein to be contained λογτεία an inchauntment, as it were to perſwade them anie thing whether they would or no. And heerehence is ſayde, that men were firſt withdrawne from a wylde and ſauadge kinde of life, to ciuillity and gentlenes, and ye right knowledge of humanity by the force of this meaſurable or tunable ſpeaking.

This opinion ſhall you finde confirmed throughout

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the whole workes of *Plato* and *Ariſtotle*. And that ſuch was the eſtimation of this Poetry at thoſe times, that they ſuppoſed all wiſedome and knowledge to be included myſtically in that diuine inſtinction, wherewith they thought their *Vates* to bee inſpyred. Wherevpon, throughout the noble workes of thoſe moſt excellent Philoſophers before named, are the authorities of Poets very often alledged. And *Cicero* in his *Tuſculane* queſtions is of that minde, that a Poet cannot expreſſe verſes aboundantly, ſufficiently, and fully, neither his eloquence can flowe pleaſaunt ly, or his wordes ſounde well and plenteouſly, without celeſtiall inſtinction: which Poets themſelues doo very oſten and gladlie witnes of themſelues, as namely *Ouid* in. 6. *Faſto*: *Eſt deus in nobis Agitante calleſcimus illo. etc.* Wherevnto I doubt not equally to adioyne the authoritye of our late famous Engliſh Poet, who wrote the *Sheepheards Calender*, where lamenting the decay of Poetry, at theſe dayes, ſaith moſt ſweetely to the ſame.

Then make thee winges of thine aſpyring wytt,

And whence thou cameſt flye back to heauen apace. etc.

Whoſe fine poeticall witt, and moſt exquiſite learning, as he ſhewed aboundantly in that peece of worke, in my iudgment inferiour to the workes neither of *Theocritus* in Greeke, nor *Virgill* in Latine, whom hee narrowly immitateth: ſo I nothing doubt, but if his other workes were common abroade, which are as I thinke in ye cloſe cuſtodie of certaine his freends, we ſhould haue of our owne Poets, whom wee might matche in all reſpects with the beſt. And among all other his workes whatſoeuer, I would wyſh to haue the ſight of hys *Engliſh Poet*, which his freend *E. K.* did once promiſe to publiſhe, which whether he performed or not, I knowe not, if he did, my happe hath not beene ſo good as yet to ſee it.

But to returne to the eſtimation of Poetry. Beſides ye great and profitable fruites contained in Poetry, for

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the inſtruction of manners and precepts of good life (for that was cheefly reſpected in the firſt age of Poetry) this is alſo added to the eternall commendations of that noble faculty: that Kinges and Princes, great and famous men, did euer encourage, mayntaine, and reward Poets in al ages: becauſe they were thought onely to haue the whole power in their handes, of making men either immortally famous for their valiaunt exploytes and vertuous exerciſes, or perpetually infamous for their vicious liues. Wherevppon it is ſaid of *Achilles*, that this onely vantage he had of *Hector*, that it was his fortune to be extolled and renowned by the heauenly verſe of *Homer*. And as *Tully* recordeth to be written of *Alexander*, that with natural teares he wept ouer *Achilles* Tombe, in ioy that he conceiued at the conſideration, howe it was his happe to be honoured wyth ſo diuine a worke, as *Homers* was. *Ariſtotle*, a moſt prudent and learned Philoſopher, beeing appointed Schoolemaſter to the young Prince *Alexander*, thought no worke ſo meete to be reade vnto a King, as the worke of *Homer*: wherein the young Prince being by him inſtructed throughly, found ſuch wonderfull delight in the ſame when hee came to maturity, that hee would not onely haue it with him in all his iourneyes, but in his bedde alſo vnder his pyllowe, to delight him and teache him both nights and dayes. The ſame is reported of noble *Scipio*, who finding the two Bookes of *Homer* in the ſpoyle of Kyng *Darius*, eſteemed them as wonderfull precious Iewelles, making one of them his companion for the night, the other for the day. And not onely was he thus affected to yat one peece or parte of Poetry, but ſo generally he loued the profeſſors thereof, that in his moſt ſerious affayres, and hotteſt warres againſt *Numantia* and *Carthage* he could no whitte be without that olde Poet *Ennius* in his company. But to ſpeake of all thoſe noble and wyſe Princes, who bare ſpeciall fauour and countenaunce to Poets, were tedious, and would require a rehearſall of all ſuch, in whoſe time there grewe any to credite and

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eſtimation in that faculty. Thus farre therefore may ſuffice for the eſtimation of Poets. Nowe I thinke moſt meete, to ſpeake ſomewhat, concerning what hath beene the vſe of Poetry, and wherin it rightly conſiſted, and whereof conſequently it obteyned ſuch eſtimation.

To begin therefore with the firſt that was firſt worthelye memorable in the excellent gyft of Poetrye, the beſt wryters agree that it was *Orpheus*, who by the ſweete gyft of his heauenly Poetry, withdrew men from raungyng vncertainly, and wandring brutiſhly about, and made them gather together, and keepe company, made houſes, and kept fellowſhippe together, who therefore is reported (as *Horace* ſayth) to aſſwage the fierceneſſe of Tygers, and mooue the harde Flynts. After him was *Amphion*, who was the firſt that cauſed Citties to bee builded, and men therein to liue decently and orderly according to lawe and right. Next, was *Tyrtæus*, who began to practiſe warlike defences, to keepe back enemies, and ſaue themſelues from inuaſion of foes. In thys place I thinke were moſt conuenient to rehearſe that auncient Poet *Pyndarus*: but of the certaine time wherein he flouriſhed, I am not very certaine: but of the place where he continued moſte, it ſhoulde ſeeme to be the Citty of *Thebes*, by *Plinie* who reporteth, that *Alexander* in ſacking the ſame Cittie, woulde not ſuffer the houſe wherein he dwelt to be ſpoyled as all the reſt were. After theſe was *Homer*, who as it were in one ſumme comprehended all knowledge, wiſedome, learning, and pollicie, that was incident to the capacity of man. And who ſo liſte to take viewe of hys two Bookes, one of his *Iliades*, the other his *Odiſsea*, ſhall throughly perceiue what the right vſe of Poetry is: which indeede is to mingle profite with pleaſure, and ſo to delight the Reader with pleaſantnes of hys Arte, as in ye meane time, his mind may be well inſtructed with knowledge and wiſedome. For ſo did that worthy Poet frame thoſe his two workes, that in reading the firſt, that is his *Iliads*, by declaring and ſetting forth ſo liuely the Grecians aſſembly againſt

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Troy, together with their proweſſe and fortitude againſt their foes, a Prince ſhall learne not onely courage, and valiantneſſe, but diſcretion alſo and pollicie to encounter with his enemies, yea a perfect forme of wyſe conſultations, with his Captaines, and exhortations to the people, with other infinite commodities.

Agayne, in the other part, wherein are deſcribed the manifold and daungerous aduentures of *Vliſſes*, may a man learne many noble vertues: and alſo learne to eſcape and auoyde the ſubtyll practiſes, and perrilous entrappinges of naughty perſons: and not onely this, but in what ſort alſo he may deale to knowe and perceiue the affections of thoſe which be neere vnto him, and moſt familiar with him, the better to put them in truſt with his matters of waight and importaunce. Therefore I may boldly ſette downe thys to be the trueſt, auncienteſt and beſt kinde of Poetry, to direct ones endeuour alwayes to that marke, that with delight they may euermore adioyne commoditie to theyr Readers: which becauſe I grounde vpon *Homer* the Prince of all Poets, therefore haue I alledged the order of his worke, as an authority ſufficiently prooving this aſſertion.

Nowe what other Poets which followed him, and beene of greateſt fame, haue doone for the moſte parte in their ſeuerall workes I wyll briefely, and as my ſlender ability wyll ſerue me declare. But by my leaue, I muſt content my ſelfe to ſpeake not of all, but of ſuch as my ſelfe haue ſeene, and beene beſt acquainted withall, and thoſe not all nor the moſte part of the auncient Grecians, of whom I know not how many there were, but theſe of the Latiniſts, which are of greateſt fame and moſt obuious among vs.

Thus much I can ſay, that *Ariſtotle* reporteth none to haue greatly flouriſhed in Greece, at leaſt wyſe not left behynd them any notable memoriall, before the time of *Homer*. And *Tully* ſayth as much, that there were none wrytt woorth the reading twyce in the Romaine tongue, before ye Poet *Ennius*. And ſurely

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as the very ſumme or cheefeſt eſſence of Poetry, dyd alwayes for the moſt part conſiſt in delighting the readers or hearers wyth pleaſure, ſo as the number of Poets increaſed, they ſtyll inclyned thys way rather then the other, ſo that moſt of them had ſpeciall regarde, to the pleaſantneſſe of theyr fine conceytes, whereby they might drawe mens mindes into admiration of theyr inuentions, more then they had to the profitte or commoditye that the Readers ſhoulde reape by their works. And thus as I ſuppoſe came it to paſſe among them, that for the moſt part of them, they would not write one worke contayning ſome ſerious matter: but for the ſame they wold likewiſe powre foorth as much of ſome wanton or laciuious inuention. Yet ſome of the auncienteſt ſort of Grecians, as it ſeemeth were not ſo much diſpoſed to vayne delectation: as *Ariſtotle* ſayth of *Empedocles*, that in hys iudgment he was onely a naturall Philoſopher, no Poet at all, nor that he was like vnto *Homer* in any thing but hys meeter, or number of feete, that is, that hee wrote in verſe. After the time of *Homer*, there began the firſte Comedy wryters, who compyled theyr workes in a better ſtile which continued not long, before it was expelled by penalty, for ſcoffing too broade at mens manners, and the priuie reuengements which the Poets vſed againſt their ill wyllers. Among theſe was *Eupolis*, *Cratinus*, and *Ariſtophenes*, but afterward the order of thys wryting Comedies was reformed and made more plauſible: then wrytte *Plato*, *Comicus*, *Menander*, and I knowe not who more.

There be many moſt profitable workes, of like antiquity, or rather before them, of the Tragedy writers: as of *Euripides*, and *Sophocles*, then was there *Phocitides* and *Theagines*, with many other: which Tragedies had their inuention by one *Theſpis*, and were polliſhed and amended by *Æſchilus*. The profitte or diſcommoditie which aryſeth by the vſe of theſe Comedies and Tragedies, which is moſt, hath beene long in controuerſie, and is fore vrged among vs at theſe dayes: what

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I thinke of the ſame, perhaps I ſhall breefely declare anon.

Nowe concerning the Poets which wrote in homely manner, as they pretended, but indeede, with great pythe and learned iudgment, ſuch as were the wryters of Sheepeheards talke and of huſbandly precepts, who were among the Grecians that excelled, beſides *Theocritus* and *Heſiodus* I know not, of whom the firſt, what profitable workes he left to poſterity, beſides hys *Idillia* or contentions of Goteheards, tending moſt to delight, and pretty inuentions, I can not tell. The other, no doubt for his Argument he tooke in hande, dealt very learnedly and profitably, that is, in precepts of Huſbandry, but yet ſo as he myxed much wanton ſtuffe among the reſt.

The firſt wryters of Poetry among the Latines, ſhoulde ſeeme to be thoſe, which excelled in the framing of Commedies, and that they continued a long time without any notable memory of other Poets. Among whom, the cheefeſt that we may ſee or heare tell of, were theſe. *Ennius*, *Cæcilius*, *Nœuius*, *Licinius*, *Attilius*, *Turpitius*, *Trabea*, *Luſcius*, *Plautus*, and *Terens.* Of whom theſe two laſt named, haue beene euer ſince theyr time moſt famous, and to theſe dayes are eſteemed, as greate helpes and furtheraunces to the obtayning of good Letters. But heere cannot I ſtaye to ſpeake of the moſt famous, renowned and excellent, that euer writte among the Latine Poets, *P. Virgill*, who performed the very ſame in that tongue, which *Homer* had doone in Greeke: or rather better if better might as *Sex. Propert.* in his *Elegies* gallantly recordeth in his praiſe, *Nefcio quid magis naſcitur Iliade.* Vnder the perſon of *Æneas* he expreſſeth the valoure of a worthy Captaine and valiaunt Gouernour, together with the perrilous aduentures of warre, and polliticke deuiſes at all aſſayes. And as he immitateth *Homer* in that worke, ſo dooth he likewyſe followe the very ſteps of *Theocritus*, in his moſt pythy inuentions of his *Æglogues*: and likewyſe *Heſiodus* in his *Georgicks* or bookes of

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Huſbandry, but yet more grauely, and in a more decent ſtyle. But notwithſtanding hys ſage grauity and wonderfull wiſedome, dyd he not altogether reſtrayne his vayne, but that he would haue a caſt at ſome wanton and ſkant comely an Argument, if indeede ſuch trifles as be fathered vppon him were his owne. There followed after him, very many rare and excellent Poets, whereof the moſt part writt light matters, as *Epigrammes* and *Elegies*, with much pleaſant dalliance, among whom may be accounted *Propertius*, *Tibullus*, *Catullus*, with diuers whom *Ouid* ſpeaketh of in diuers places of his workes. Then are there two Hyſtoricall Poets, no leſſe profitable then delightſome to bee read: *Silius* and *Lucanus*: the one declaring the valiant proweſſe of two noble Captaines, one enemie to the other, that is, *Scipio* and *Haniball*: the other likewiſe, the fortitude of two expert warriours (yet more lamentably then the other becauſe theſe warres were ciuill) *Pompey* and *Cæſar*. The next in tyme (but as moſt men doo account, and ſo did he himſelfe) the ſecond in dignity, we will ad ioyne *Ouid*, a moſt learned, and exquiſite Poet. The worke of greateſt profitte which he wrote, was his Booke of *Metamorphoſis*, which though it conſiſted ot fayned Fables for the moſt part, and poeticall inuentions, yet beeing moralized according to his meaning, and the trueth of euery tale beeing diſcouered, it is a worke of exceeding wyſedome and ſounde iudgment. If one lyſt in like manner, to haue knowledge and perfect intelligence of thoſe rytes and ceremonies which were obſerued after the Religion of the Heathen, no more profitable worke for that purpoſe, then his bookes *De faſtis*. The reſt of his dooinges, though they tende to the vayne delights of loue and dalliaunce (except his *Triſtibus* wherein he bewayleth hys exile) yet ſurely are mixed with much good counſayle and profitable leſſons if they be wiſely and narrowly read. After his time I know no worke of any great fame, till the time of *Horace*, a Poet not of the ſmootheſt ſtyle, but in ſharpneſſe of wytt inferiour to none, and one to whom

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all the reſt both before his time and ſince, are very much beholding. About the ſame time *Iuuenall* and *Perſius*, then *Martial*, *Seneca* a moſt excellent wryter of Tragedies, *Boetius*, *Lucretius*, *Statius*, *Val*: *Flaccus*, *Manilius*, *Auſonius*, *Claudian*, and many other, whoſe iuſt times and ſeuerall woorkes to ſpeake of in this place, were neither much needefull, nor altogeather tollerable, becauſe I purpoſed an other argument. Onely I will adde two of later times, yet not farre inferiour to the moſt of them aforeſayde, *Pallengenius*, and *Bap. Mantuanus*, and ſor a ſinguler gyft in a ſweete Heroicall verſe, match with them *Chr. Oclan.* the Authour of our *Anglorum Prælia.* But nowe leaſt I ſtray too farre from my purpoſe, I wyl come to our Engliſh Poets, to whom I would I were able to yeelde theyr deſerued commendations: and affoorde them that cenſure, which I know many woulde, which can better, if they were nowe to write in my ſteede.

I know no memorable worke written by any Poet in our Engliſh ſpeeche, vntill twenty yeeres paſt: where although Learning was not generally decayde at any time, eſpecially ſince the Conqueſt of King *William* Duke of *Normandy*, as it may appeare by many famous works and learned bookes (though not of this kinde) wrytten by Byſhoppes and others: yet ſurelye that Poetry was in ſmall price among them, it is very manifeſt, and no great maruayle, for euen that light of Greeke and Latine Poets which they had, they much contemned, as appeareth by theyr rude verſifying, which of long time was vſed (a barbarous vſe it was) wherin they conuerted the naturall property of the ſweete Latine verſe, to be a balde kinde of ryming, thinking nothing to be learnedly written in verſe, which fell not out in ryme, that is, in wordes whereof the middle worde of eche verſe ſhould ſound a like with the laſt, or of two verſes, the ende of both ſhould fall in the like letters as thus.

O malè viuentes, verſus audite ſequentes.

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And thus likewyſe.

Propter hæc et alia dogmata doctorum
Reor eſſe melius et magis decorum:
Quiſque ſuam habeat, et non proximorum.

This brutiſh Poetrie, though it had not the beginning in this Countrey, yet ſo hath it beene affected heere, that the infection thereof would neuer (nor I thinke euer will) be rooted vppe againe: I meane this tynkerly verſe which we call ryme: Maſter *Aſcham* ſayth, that it firſt began to be followed and maintained among the *Hunnes* and *Gothians*, and other barbarous Nations, who with the decay of all good learning, brought it into *Italy*: from thence it came into *Fraunce*, and ſo to *Germany*, at laſt conueyed into *England*, by men indeede of great wiſedome and learning, but not conſiderate nor circumſpect in that behalfe. But of this I muſt intreate more heereafter.

Henry the firſt King of that name in England, is wonderfully extolled, in all auncient Recordes of memory, for hys ſinguler good learning, in all kinde of noble ſtudies, in ſo much as he was named by his ſurname *Beaucleark*, as much to ſay, as *Fayreclerke* (whereof perhappes came ye name of *Fayreclowe*) what knowledge hee attained in the ſkyll of Poetry, I am not able to ſay, I report his name for proofe, that learning in this Country was not little eſteemed of at that rude time, and that like it is, among other ſtudies, a King would not neglect the faculty of Poetry. The firſt of our Engliſh Poets that I haue heard of, was *Iohn Gower*, about the time of king *Rychard* the ſeconde, as it ſhould ſeeme by certayne coniectures bothe a Knight, and queſtionleſſe a ſinguler well learned man: whoſe workes I could wyſh they were all whole and perfect among vs, for no doubt they contained very much deepe knowledge and delight: which may be gathered by his freend *Chawcer*, who ſpeaketh of him oftentimes, in

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diuer[s] places of hys workes. *Chaucer*, who for that excellent fame which hee obtayned in his Poetry, was alwayes accounted the God of Engliſh Poets (ſuch a tytle for honours ſake hath beene giuen him) was next after, if not equall in time to *Gower*, and hath left many workes, both for delight and profitable knowledge, farre exceeding any other that as yet euer ſince hys time directed theyr ſtudies that way. Though the manner of hys ſtile may ſeeme blunte and courſe to many fine Engliſh eares at theſe dayes, yet in trueth, if it be equally pondered, and with good iudgment aduiſed, and confirmed with the time wherein he wrote, a man ſhall perceiue thereby euen a true picture or perfect ſhape of a right Poet. He by his delightſome vayne, ſo gulled the eares of men with his deuiſes, that, although corruption bare ſuch ſway in moſt matters, that learning and truth might ſkant bee admitted to ſhewe it ſelfe, yet without controllment, myght hee gyrde at the vices and abuſes of all ſtates, and gawle with very ſharpe and eger inuentions, which he did ſo learnedly and pleaſantly, that none therefore would call him into queſtion. For ſuch was his bolde ſpyrit, that what enormities he ſaw in any, he would not ſpare to pay them home, eyther in playne words, or els in ſome prety and pleaſant couert, that the ſimpleſt might eſpy him.

Neere in time vnto him was *Lydgate* a Poet, ſurely for good proportion of his verſe, and meetely currant ſtyle, as the time affoorded comparable with *Chaucer*, yet more occupyed in ſuperſticious and odde matters, then was requeſite in ſo good a wytte: which, though he handled them commendably, yet the matters themſelues beeing not ſo commendable, hys eſtimation hath beene the leſſe. The next of our auncient Poets, that I can tell of, I ſuppoſe to be *Pierce Ploughman*, who in hys dooinges is ſomewhat harſhe and obſcure, but indeede a very pithy wryter, and (to hys commendation I ſpeake it) was the firſt that I haue ſeene, that obſerued ye quantity of our verſe without the curioſity of Ryme.

Since theſe I knowe none other tyll the time of

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Skelton, who writ in the time of Kyng *Henry* the eyght, who as indeede he obtayned the Lawrell Garland, ſo may I wyth good ryght yeelde him the title of a Poet: hee was doubtles a pleaſant conceyted fellowe, and of a very ſharpe wytte, exceeding bolde, and would nyppe to the very quicke where he once ſette holde. Next hym I thynke I may place maſter *George Gaſkoyne*, as painefull a Souldier in the affayres of hys Prince and Country, as he was a wytty Poet in his wryting: whoſe commendations, becauſe I found in one of better iudgment then my ſelfe, I wyl ſette downe hys wordes, and ſuppreſſe myne owne, of hym thus wryteth *E. K.* vppon the ninth *Æglogue* of the new Poet.

Maſter *George Gaſkoyne* a wytty Gentleman and the very cheeſe of our late rymers, who and if ſome partes of learning wanted not (albeit is well knowne he altogether wanted not learning) no doubt would haue attayned to the excellencye of thoſe famous Poets. For gyfts of wytt, and naturall promptnes appeare in him aboundantly. I might next ſpeake of the dyuers workes of the olde Earle of *Surrey*: of the L. *Vaus*, of *Norton*, of *Briſtow*, *Edwardes*, *Tuſſer*, *Churchyard*. *VVyl*: *Hunnis*: *Haiwood*: *Sand*: *Hyll*: *S. Y. M. D.* and many others, but to ſpeake of their ſeuerall gyfts, and aboundant ſkyll ſhewed forth by them in many pretty and learned workes, would make my diſcourſe much more tedious.

I may not omitte the deſerued commendations of many honourable and noble Lordes, and Gentlemen, in her Maieſties Courte, which in the rare deuiſes of Poetry, haue beene and yet are moſt excellent ſkylfull, among whom, the right honourable Earle of *Oxford* may challenge to him ſelfe the tytle of ye moſt excellent among the reſt. I can no longer forget thoſe learned Gentlemen which tooke ſuch profitable paynes in translating the Latine Poets into our Engliſh tongue, whoſe deſertes in that behalfe are more then I can vtter. Among theſe, I euer eſteemed, and while I lyue, in my conceyt I ſhall account Maſter *D. Phaer*: without doubt

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the beſt: who as indeede hee had the beſt peece of Poetry whereon to ſette a moſt gallant verſe, ſo performed he it accordingly, and in ſuch ſort, as in my conſcience I thinke would ſcarcely be doone againe, if it were to doo again. Notwithſtanding, I ſpeak it but as myne own fancy, not preiudiciall to thoſe that liſt to thinke otherwyſe. Hys worke whereof I ſpeake, is the engliſhing of *Æneidos* of *Virgill*, ſo farre foorth as it pleaſed God to ſpare him life, which was to the halfe parte of the tenth Booke, the reſt beeing ſince wyth no leſſe commendations finiſhed, by that worthy ſcholler and famous Phiſition Maſter *Thomas Twyne.*

Equally with him may I well adioyne Maſter *Arthur Golding*, for hys labour in engliſhing *Ouids Metamorphoſis*, for which Gentleman, ſurely our Country hath for many reſpects greatly to gyue God thankes: as for him which hath taken infinite paynes without ceaſing, trauelleth as yet indefatigably, and is addicted without ſociety, by his continuall laboure, to profit this nation and ſpeeche in all kind of good learning. The next, very well deſerueth Maſter *Barnabe Googe* to be placed, as a painefull furtherer of learning: hys helpe to Poetry beſides hys owne deuiſes, as the tranſlating of *Pallengenius. Lodiac. Abraham Flemming* as in many prety Poeſis of hys owne, ſo in tranſlating hath doone to hys commendations. To whom I would heere adioyne one of hys name, whom I know to haue excelled, as well in all kinde of learning as in Poetry moſt eſpecially, and would appeare ſo, if the dainty morſelles, and fine poeticall inuentions of hys, were as common abroade as I knowe they be among ſome of hys freendes. I wyl craue leaue of the laudable Authors of *Seneca* in Engliſh, of the other partes of *Ouid*, of *Horace*, of *Mantuan*, and diuers other, becauſe I would haſten to ende thys rehearſall, perhappes offenſyue to ſome, whom eyther by forgetfulnes, or want of knowledge, I muſt needes ouer paſſe.

And once againe, I am humbly to deſire pardon of the learned company of Gentlemen Schollers, and

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ſtudents of the Vniuerſities, and Innes of Courte, yf I omitte theyr ſeuerall commendations in this place, which I knowe a great number of them haue worthely deſerued, in many rare deuiſes, and ſinguler inuentions of Poetrie: for neither hath it beene my good happe, to haue ſeene all which I haue hearde of, neyther is my abyding in ſuch place, where I can with facility get knowledge of their workes.

One Gentleman notwithſtanding among them may I not ouerſlyppe, ſo farre reacheth his fame, and ſo worthy is he, if hee haue not already, to weare the Lawrell wreathe, Maſter *George VVhetſtone*, a man ſingularly well ſkyld in this faculty of Poetrie: To him I wyl ioyne *Anthony Munday*, an earneſt traueller in this arte, and in whoſe name I haue ſeene very excellent workes, among which ſurely, the moſt exquiſite vaine of a witty poeticall heade is ſhewed in the ſweete ſobs of Sheepheardes and Nymphes: a worke well worthy to be viewed, and to bee eſteemed as very rare Poetrie. With theſe I may place *Iohn Graunge*, *Knyght*, *VVylmott*, *Darrell*, *F. C. F. K. G. B.* and many other, whoſe names come not nowe to my remembraunce.

This place haue I purpoſely reſerued for one, who if not only, yet in my iudgement principally deſerueth the tytle of the righteſt Engliſh Poet, that euer I read: that is, the Author of the Sheepeheardes Kalender, intituled to the woorthy Gentleman Maſter *Phillip Sydney*, whether it was Maſter *Sp.* or what rare Scholler in Pembrooke Hall ſoeuer, becauſe himſelf and his freendes, for what reſpect I knowe not, would not reueale it, I force not greatly to ſette downe: ſorry I am that I can not find none other with whom I might couple him in this *Catalogue*, in his rare gyft of Poetry: although one there is, though nowe long ſince, ſeriouſly occupied in grauer ſtudies, (Maſter *Gabriell Haruey*) yet, as he was once his moſt ſpecial freende and fellow Poet, ſo becauſe he hath taken ſuch paynes, not onely in his Latin Poetry (for which he enioyed great commendations of the beſt both in iudgment and dignity in

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thys Realme) but alſo to reforme our Engliſh verſe, and to beautify the ſame with braue deuiſes, of which I thinke the cheefe lye hidde in hatefull obſcurity: therefore wyll I aduenture to ſette them together, as two of the rareſt witts, and learnedſt maſters of Poetrie in England. Whoſe worthy and notable ſkyl in this faculty, I would wyſh if their high dignities and ſerious buſineſſes would permit, they would ſtyll graunt to bee a furtheraunce to that reformed kinde of Poetry, which Maſter *Haruey* did once beginne to ratify: and ſurely in mine opinion, if hee had choſen ſome grauer matter, and handled but with halfe that ſkyll, which I knowe he could haue doone, and not powred it foorth at a venture, as a thinge betweene ieſt and earneſt, it had taken greater effect then it did.

As for the other Gentleman, if it would pleaſe him or hys freendes to let thoſe excellent *Poemes*, whereof I know he hath plenty, come abroad, as his Dreames, his Legends, his Court of *Cupid*, his English Poet with other: he ſhoulde not onely ſtay the rude pens of my ſelfe and others, but alſo ſatiſfye the thirſty deſires of many which deſire nothing more, then to ſee more of hys rare inuentions. If I ioyne to Maſter *Haruey* hys two Brethren, I am aſſured, though they be both buſied with great and waighty callinges (the one a godly and learned Diuine, the other a famous and ſkylfull Phiſition) yet if they lyſted to ſette to their helping handes to Poetry, they would as much beautify and adorne it as any others.

If I let paſſe the vncountable rabble of ryming Ballet makers and compylers of ſenceleſſe ſonets, who be moſt buſy, to ſtuffe euery ſtall full of groſſe deuiſes and vnlearned Pamphlets: I truſt I ſhall with the beſt ſort be held excuſed. Nor though many ſuch can frame an Alehouſe ſong of fiue of ſixe ſcore verſes, hobbling vppon ſome tune of a Northen lygge, or Robyn hoode, or La lubber etc. And perhappes obſerue iuſt number of ſillables, eyght in one line, ſixe in an other, and there withall an A to make a iercke in the ende: yet if theſe

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might be accounted Poets (as it is ſayde ſome of them make meanes to be promoted to ye Lawrell) ſurely we ſhall ſhortly haue whole ſwarmes of Poets: and euery one that can frame a Booke in Ryme, though for want of matter, it be but in commendations of Copper noſes or Bottle Ale, wyll catch at the Garlande due to Poets: whoſe potticall poeticall (I ſhould ſay) heades, I would wyſhe, at their worſhipfull comencements might in ſteede of Lawrell, be gorgiouſly garniſhed with ſayre greene Barley, in token of their good affection to our Engliſhe Malt. One ſpeaketh thus homely of them, with whoſe words I wyll content my ſelfe for thys time, becauſe I woulde not bee too broade wyth them in myne owne ſpeeche.

In regarde (he meaneth of the learned framing the newe Poets workes which writt the Sheepheardes Calender.) I ſcorne and ſpue out the rakehelly rout of our ragged Rymers, (for ſo themſelues vſe to hunt the Letter) which without learning boaſte, without iudgment iangle, without reaſon rage and fume, as if ſome inſtinct of poeticall ſpyrite had newlie rauiſhed them, aboue the meaneſſe of common capacity. And beeing in the midſt of all their brauery, ſuddainly for want of matter or of Ryme, or hauing forgotten their former conceyt, they ſeeme to be ſo payned and trauelled in theyr remembraunce, as it were a woman in Chyldbyrth, or as that ſame *Pythia* when the traunce came vpon her. *Os rabidum fera corda domans etc.*

THus farre foorth haue I aduentured to ſette downe parte of my ſimple iudgement concerning thoſe Poets, with whom for the moſt part I haue beene acquainted through myne owne reading: which though it may

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ſeeme ſomething impertinent to the tytle of my Booke, yet I truſt the courteous Readers wyll pardon me, conſidering that poetry is not of that grounde and antiquity in our Engliſh tongue, but that ſpeaking thereof only as it is Engliſh, would ſeeme like vnto the drawing of ones pycture without a heade.

Nowe therefore by your gentle patience, wyll I wyth like breuity make tryall, what I can ſay concerning our Engliſhe Poetry, firſt in the matter thereof, then in the forme, that is, the manner of our verſe: yet ſo as I muſt euermore haue recourſe to thoſe times and wryters, whereon the Engliſh poetry taketh as it were the diſcent and proprietye.

Engliſh Poetry therefore beeing conſidered according to common cuſtome and auncient vſe, is, where any worke is learnedly compiled in meaſurable ſpeeche, and framed in wordes contayning number or proportion of iuſt ſyllables, delighting the readers or hearers as well by the apt and decent framing of wordes in equall reſemblance of quantity, commonly called verſe, as by the ſkyllfull handling of the matter whereof it is intreated. I ſpake ſomewhat of the beginning of thys meaſuring of wordes in iuſt number, taken out of *Plato*: and indeede the regarde of true quantity in Letters and ſyllables, ſeemeth not to haue been much vrged before the time of *Homer* in Greece, as *Ariſtotle* witneſſeth.

The matters whereof verſes were firſt made, were eyther exhortations to vertue, dehortations from vice, or the prayſes of ſome laudable thing. From thence they beganne to vſe them in exerciſes of immitating ſome vertuous and wiſe man at their feaſtes: where as ſome one ſhoulde be appointed to repreſent an other mans perſon of high eſtimation, and he ſang fine ditties and wittie ſentences, tunably to their Muſick notes. Of thys ſprang the firſt kinde of Comedyes, when they beganne to bring into theſe exerciſes, more perſons then one, whoſe ſpeeches were deuiſed Dyalogue wiſe, in aunſwering one another. And of ſuch like exer-

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ciſes, or as ſome wyll needes haue it, long before the other, began the firſt Tragedies, and were ſo called of τραγος, becauſe the Actor when he began to play his part, ſlewe and offered a Goate to their Goddeſſe: but Commedies tooke their name of κομάζειν και ἄδειν *comeſsatum ire*, to goe a feaſting, becauſe they vſed to goe in proceſſion with their ſport about the Citties and Villages, mingling much pleaſaunt myrth wyth theyr graue Religion, and feaſting cheerefully together wyth as great ioy as might be deuiſed. But not long after (as one delight draweth another) they began to inuent new perſons and newe matters for their Comedies, ſuch as the deuiſers thought meeteſt to pleaſe the peoples vaine: And from theſe, they beganne to preſent in ſhapes of men, the natures of vertues and vices, and affections and quallities incident to men, as Iuſtice, Temperance, Pouerty, Wrathe, Vengeaunce, Sloth, Valiantnes, and ſuch like, as may appeare by the auncient workes of *Ariſtophanes*. There grewe at laſt to be a greater diuerſitye betweene Tragedy wryters and Comedy wryters, the one expreſſing onely ſorrowfull and lamentable Hyſtories, bringing in the perſons of Gods and Goddeſſes, Kynges and Queenes, and great ſtates, whoſe parts were cheefely to expreſſe moſt miſerable calamities and dreadfull chaunces, which increaſed worſe and worſe, tyll they came to the moſt wofull plight that might be deuiſed.

The Comedies on the other ſide, were directed to a contrary ende, which beginning doubtfully, drewe to ſome trouble or turmoyle, and by ſome lucky chaunce alwayes ended to the ioy and appeaſement of all parties. Thys diſtinction grewe as ſome holde opinion, by immitation of the workes of *Homer*: for out of his *Iliads*, the Tragedy wryters ſounde dreadfull euents, whereon to frame their matters, and the other out of hys *Odyſſea* tooke arguments of delight, and pleaſant ending after dangerous and troubleſome doubtes. So that, though there be many ſortes of poeticall wrytings, and Poetry is not debarred from any matter, which

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may be expreſſed by penne or ſpeeche, yet for the better vnderſtanding, and breefer method of thys diſcourſe, I may comprehende the ſame in three ſortes, which are Comicall, Tragicall, Hiſtori[c]all. Vnder the firſt, may be contained all ſuch *Epigrammes*, *Elegies* and delectable ditties, which Poets haue deuiſed reſpecting onely the delight thereof: in the ſeconde, all dolefull complaynts, lamentable chaunces, and what ſoeuer is poetically expreſſed in ſorrow and heauines. In the third, we may compriſe, the reſte of all ſuch matters, which is indifferent betweene the other two, doo commonly occupy the pennes of Poets: ſuch, are the poeticall compyling of Chronicles, the freendly greetings betweene freendes, and very many ſortes beſides, which for the better diſtinction may be referred to one of theſe three kindes of Poetry. But once againe, leaſt my diſcourſe runne too farre awry, wyll I buckle my ſelfe more neerer to Engliſh Poetry: the vſe wherof, becauſe it is nothing different from any other, I thinke beſt to confirme by the teſtimony of *Horace*, a man worthy to beare authority in this matter: whoſe very opinion is this, that the perfect perfection of poetrie is this, to mingle delight with profitt in ſuch wyſe, that a Reader might by his reading be pertaker of bothe, which though I touched in the beginning, yet I thought good to alledge in this place for more confirmation thereof ſome of hys owne wordes. In his treatiſe *de arte Poetica*, thus hee ſayth.

Aut prodeſſe volunt aut delectare poetæ,
Aut ſimul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.

As much to ſaie: All Poets deſire either by their works to profitt or delight men, or els to ioyne both profitable and pleaſant leſſons together for the inſtruction of life.

And again

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Omne tulit punctum qui miſcuit vtile dulci,
Lectorum delectando pariterque mouendo.

That is, He miſſeth nothing of his marke which ioyneth profitt with delight, as well delighting his Readers, as profiting them with counſell. And that whole Epiſtle which hee wryt of his Arte of Poetrie, among all the parts thereof, runneth cheefelie vppon this, that whether the argument which the Poet handleth, be of thinges doone, or fained inuentions, yet that they ſhould beare ſuch an Image of trueth, that as they delight they may likewiſe profitt. For theſe are his wordes. *Ficta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris.* Let thinges that are faigned for pleaſures ſake, haue a neere reſemblance of ye truth. This precept may you perceiue to bee moſt duelie obſerued of *Chawcer:* for who could with more delight, preſcribe ſuch wholſome counſaile and ſage aduiſe, where he ſeemeth onelie to reſpect the profitte of his leſſons and inſtructions? or who coulde with greater wiſedome, or more pithie ſkill, vnfold ſuch pleaſant and delightſome matters of mirth, as though they reſpected nothing, but the telling of a merry tale? ſo that this is the very grounde of right poetrie, to giue profitable counſaile, yet ſo as it muſt be mingled with delight. For among all the auncient works of poetrie, though the moſt of them incline much to that part of delighting men with pleaſant matters of ſmall importaunce, yet euen in the vaineſt trifles among them, there is not forgotten ſome profitable counſaile, which a man may learne, either by flatte precepts which therein are preſcribed, or by loathing ſuch vile vices, the enormities whereof they largelie diſcouer. For ſurelie, I am of this opinion, that the wantoneſt Poets of all, in their moſt laciuious workes wherein they buſied themſelues, ſought rather by that meanes to withdraw mens mindes (eſpeciallie the beſt natures) from ſuch foule vices, then to allure them to imbrace ſuch beaſtly follies as they detected.

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Horace ſpeaking of the generall dueties of Poets, ſayth, *Os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta fugitat*, and manie more wordes concerning the profitte to be hadde out of Poets, which becauſe I haue ſome of them compriſed into an Engliſh tranſlation of that learned and famous knight, Sir *Thomas Elyot*, I wyll ſet downe his wordes.

The Poet faſhioneth by ſome pleaſant meane,
The ſpeeche of children ſtable and vnſure:
Gulling their eares from wordes and thinges vncleane,
Giuing to them precepts that are pure:
Rebuking enuy and wrath if it dure:
Thinges well donne he can by example commend,
To needy and ſicke he doth alſo his cure
To recomfort if ought he can amende.

And manie other like wordes are in that place of *Horace* to like effect. Therefore poetrie, as it is of it ſelfe, without abuſe is not onely not vnprofitable to the liues and ſtudies of menne, but wonderfull commendable and of great excellencie. For nothing can be more acceptable to men, or rather to be wiſhed, then ſweete allurements to vertues, and commodious caueates from vices? of which Poetrie is exceeding plentifull, powring into gentle witts, not roughly and tirannicallie, but it is were with a louing authoritie. Nowe if the ill and vndecent prouocations, whereof ſome vnbridled witts take occaſion by the reading of laciuious Poemes, bee obiected: ſuch as are *Ouids* loue Bookes, and *Elegies*, *Tibullus*, *Catullus*, and *Martials* workes, with the Comedies for the moſt part of *Plautus* and *Terence*: I thinke it eaſily aunſwered. For though it may not iuſtlie be denied, that theſe workes are indeede very Poetrie, yet that Poetrie in them is not the eſſentiall or formall matter or cauſe of the hurt therein might be affirmed, and although that reaſon ſhould come ſhort, yet this might be ſufficient, that the workes themſelues doo not corrupt, but the abuſe of the vſers, who vndamaging their

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owne diſpoſitions, by reading the diſcoueries of vices, reſemble fooliſh folke, who comming into a Garden without anie choiſe or circumſpection tread downe the faireſt flowers, and wilfullie thruſt their fingers among the nettles.

And ſurelie to ſpeake what I verelie thinke, this is mine opinion: that one hauing ſufficient ſkyll, to reade and vnderſtand thoſe workes, and yet no ſtaie of him ſelfe to auoyde inconueniences, which the remembraunce of vnlawfull things may ſtirre vppe in his minde, he, in my iudgement, is wholy to bee reputed a laciuious diſpoſed perſonne, whom the recitall of ſins whether it be in a good worke or a badde, or vppon what occaſion ſoeuer, wyll not ſtaie him but prouoke him further vnto them. Contrariwiſe, what good leſſons the warie and ſkylful Readers ſhall picke out of the very worſt of them, if they liſt to take anie heede, and reade them not of an intent to bee made the worſe by them, you may ſee by theſe fewe ſentences, which the foreſayd Sir *Thomas Elyott* gathered as he ſayth at all aduentures, intreating of the like argument. Firſt *Plautus* in commendations of vertue, hath ſuch like wordes.

Verely vertue doth all thinges excell,
For if liberty, health liuing or ſubſtaunce,
Our Country our parents, and children doo well,
It hapneth by vertue: ſhe doth all aduaunce,
Vertue hath all thinges vnder gouernaunce:
And in whom of vertue is founde great plenty,
Any thing that is good may neuer be dainty.

Terence, in *Eunucho* hath a profitable ſpeeche, in blaſing foorth the faſhions of harlots, before the eyes of young men. Thus ſayth *Parmeno.*

In thys thing I tryumphe in myne owne conceite,
That I haue found for all young men the way,
Howe they of Harlots ſhall know the deceite,
Their witts and manners: that thereby they may
Them perpetuallie hate, for ſo much as they

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Out of their owne houſes be freſh and delicate,
Feeding curiouſly: at home all day
Lyuing beggerlie in moſt wretched eſtate.

And many more wordes of the ſame matter, but which may be gathered by theſe fewe.

Ouid, in his moſt wanton Bookes of loue, and the remedies thereof, hath very many pithie and wiſe ſentences, which a heedefull Reader may marke, and choſe out from ye other ſtuffe. This is one.

Tyme is a medicine of it ſhall profitt,
VVine gyuen out of tyme may be annoyaunce.
And man ſhall irritat vice if he prohibitt,
VVhen time is not meete vnto his vtteraunce.
Therfore if thou yet by counſayle art recuperable,
Fly thou from idlenes and euer be ſtable.

Martiall, a moſt diſſolute wryter among all other, yet not without many graue and prudent ſpeeches, as this is one worthy to be marked of theſe fond youthes which intangle theyr wytts in raging loue, who ſtepping once ouer ſhoes in theyr fancyes, neuer reſt plunging till they be ouer head and eares in their follie.

If thou wylt eſchewe bitter aduenture,
And auoyde the annoyance of a penſifull hart,
Set in no one perſon all wholly thy pleaſure,
The leſſe maiſt thou ioy, but the leſſe ſhalt thou ſmart.

Theſe are but fewe gathered out by happe, yet ſufficient to ſhewe that the wiſe and circumſpect Readers may finde very many profitable leſſons, diſperſed in theſe workes, neither take any harme by reading ſuch Poemes, but good, if they wil themſelues. Neuertheles, I would not be thought to hold opinion, that the reading of them is ſo tollerable, as that there neede no reſpect to be had in making choyſe of readers or hearers: for if they be prohibited from the tender and vnconſtant wits of children and young mindes, I thinke

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it not without great reaſon: neyther am I of that deuilliſh opinion, of which ſome there are, and haue beene in England, who hauing charge of youth to inſtruct them in learning, haue eſpecially made choyſe of ſuch vnchildiſh ſtuffe, to reade vnto young Schollers, as it ſhoulde ſeeme of ſome filthy purpoſe, wylfully to corrupt theyr tender mindes, and prepare them the more ready for theyr loathſome dyetts.

For as it is ſayd of that impudent worke of *Luciane*, a man were better to reade none of it then all of it, ſo thinke I that theſe workes are rather to be kept altogether from children, then they ſhould haue free liberty to reade them, before they be meete either of their owne diſcretion or by heedefull inſtruction, to make choyſe of the good from the badde. As for our Engliſhe Poetrie, I know no ſuch perilous peeces (except a fewe balde ditties made ouer the Beere potts, which are nothing leſſe then Poetry) which anie man may vſe and reade without damage or daunger: which indeede is leſſe to be meruailed at among vs, then among the olde Latines and Greekes, conſidering that Chriſtianity may be a ſtaie to ſuch illecibrous workes and inuentions, as among them (for their Arte ſake) myght obtaine paſſage.

Nowe will I ſpeake ſomewhat, of that princelie part of Poetrie, wherein are diſplaied the noble actes and valiant exploits of puiſſaunt Captaines, expert ſouldiers, wiſe men, with the famous reportes of auncient times, ſuch as are the Heroycall workes of *Homer* in Greeke, and the heauenly verſe of *Virgils Æneidos* in Latine: which workes, comprehending as it were the ſumme and ground of all Poetrie, are verelie and incomparably the beſt of all other. To theſe, though wee haue no Engliſh worke aunſwerable, in reſpect of the glorious ornaments of gallant handling: yet our auncient Chroniclers and reporters of our Countrey affayres, come moſt neere them: and no doubt, if ſuch regarde of our Engliſh ſpeeche, and curious handling of our verſe, had beene long ſince thought vppon, and from time to

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time been polliſhed and bettered by men of learning, iudgement, and authority, it would ere this, haue matched them in all reſpects. A manifeſt example thereof, may bee the great good grace and ſweete vayne, which Eloquence hath attained in our ſpeeche, becauſe it hath had the helpe of ſuch rare and ſinguler wits, as from time to time myght ſtill adde ſome amendment to the ſame. Among whom I thinke there is none that will gainſay, but Maſter *Iohn Lilly* hath deſerued moſte high commendations, as he which hath ſtept one ſteppe further therein then any either before or ſince he firſt began the wyttie diſcourſe of his *Euphues*. Whoſe workes, ſurely in reſpecte of his ſinguler eloquence and braue compoſition of apt words and ſentences, let the learned examine and make tryall thereof thorough all the partes of Rethoricke, in fitte phraſes, in pithy ſentences, in gallant tropes, in flowing ſpeeche, in plaine ſence, and ſurely in my iudgment, I thinke he wyll yeelde him that verdict, which *Quintilian* giueth of bothe the beſt Orators *Demoſthenes* and *Tully*, that from the one, nothing may be taken away, to the other, nothing may be added. But a more neerer example to prooue my former aſſertion true (I meane ye meetneſſe of our ſpeeche to receiue the beſt forme of Poetry) may bee taken by conference of that famous tranſlation of Maſter D. *Phaer* with the coppie it ſelfe, who ſoeuer pleaſe with courteous iudgement but a little to compare and marke them both together: and weigh with himſelfe, whether the Engliſh tongue might by little and little be brought to the verye maieſty of a ryght Heroicall verſe. Firſt you may marke, how *Virgill* alwayes fitteth his matter in hande with wordes agreeable vnto the ſame affection, which he expreſſeth, as in hys Tragicall exclamations, what pathe[ti]call ſpeeches he frameth? in his comfortable conſolations, howe ſmoothely hys verſe runnes? in his dreadfull battayles, and dreery byckerments of warres, howe bygge and boyſtrous his wordes ſound? and the like notes in all partes of his worke may be obſerued. Which excellent

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grace and comely kind of choyſe, if the tranſlatour hath not hitte very neere in our courſe Engliſh phraſe iudge vprightly: wee wyll conferre ſome of the places, not picked out for the purpoſe, but ſuch as I tooke turning ouer the Booke at randon. When the Troyans were ſo toſt about in tempeſtious wether, cauſed by *Æolus* at *Iunoes* requeſt, and driuen vpon the coaſte of *Affrick* with a very neere ſcape of their liues: *Æneas* after hee had gone a land and kylled plenty of victuals for his company of Souldiours, hee deuided the ſame among them, and thus louinglie and ſweetely he comforted them. *Æn. Lib. i.*

et dictis mærentia pectora mulcet
O ſocii (neque ignari ſumus ante malorum)
O paſsi grauiora: dabit deus his quoque finem
Vos et ſcyllæam rabiem, penituſque ſonantes,
Accestis ſcopulos: vos et cyclopea ſaxa
Experti, reuocate animos, mœſtumque timorem
Mittite, forſan et hæc olim meminiſſe iuuabit.
Per varios caſus, per tot diſcrimina rerum
Tendimus in Latium: ſedes vbi fata quietas
Oſtendunt, illic fas regna reſurgere troiæ.
Durate, et voſmet rebus ſeruate ſecundis.
Talia voce refert, curiſque ingentibus æger
Spem vultu ſimulat, premit altum corde dolorem.

Tranſlated thus.

And then to cheere their heauy harts with theſe words he him bent.
O Mates (quoth he) that many a woe haue bidden and borne ere thys,
Worſe haue we ſeene, and this alſo ſhall end when Gods wyll is.
Through *Sylla* rage (ye wott) and through the roaring rocks we paſt,
Though *Cyclops* ſhore was full of feare, yet came we through at laſt.

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Plucke vppe your harts, and driue from thence both
feare and care away.
To thinke on this may pleaſure be perhapps another day.
By paynes and many a daunger ſore, by ſundry chaunce
we wend,
To come to *Italy*, where we truſt to find our reſting ende:
And where the deſtnyes haue decreed *Troyes* Kingdome
eſt to ryſe
Be bold and harden now your harts, take eaſe while eaſe
applies
Thus ſpake he tho, but in his hart huge cares had him
oppreſt,
Diſſembling hope with outward eyes full heauy was his
breſt.

Againe, marke the wounding of *Dido* in loue with *Æneas*, with howe choyſe wordes it is pithily deſcribed, both by the Poet and the tranſlator in the beginning of the fourth booke.

At Regina graui iam dudum ſaucia cura
Volnus alii venis, et cæco carpitur igni, etc.

By this time perced ſatte the Queene ſo ſore with loues
deſire,
Her wound in euery vayne ſhe feedes, ſhe fryes in
ſecrete fire.
The manhood of the man full oft, full oft his famous lyne
She doth reuolue, and from her thought his face cannot
vntwyne.
His countnaunce deepe ſhe drawes and fixed faſt ſhe
beares in breſt,
His words alſo, nor to her carefuil hart can come no reſt.

And in many places of the fourth booke is the ſame matter ſo gallantly proſecuted in ſweete wordes, as in mine opinion the coppy it ſelfe goeth no whit beyond it.

Compare them likewiſe in the woefull and lamentable

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cryes of the Queene for the departure of *Æneas*, towards the ende of that Booke.

Terque quaterque manu pectus percuſſa decorum
Flauentiſque abſciſſa comas, proh Iupiter, ibit?
Hic ait, et nostris inluſerit aduena Regnis? etc.

Three times her hands ſhe bet, and three times ſtrake her comely breſt,
Her golden hayre ſhe tare and frantiklike with moode oppreſt,
She cryde, O *Iupiter*, O God, quoth ſhe, and ſhall a goe?
Indeede? and ſhall a flowte me thus within my kingdome ſo?
Shall not mine Armies out, and all my people them purſue?
Shall they not ſpoyle their ſhyps and burne them vp with vengance due?
Out people, out vppon them, follow faſt with fires and flames,
Set ſayles aloft, make out with oares, in ſhips, in boates, in frames.
What ſpeake I? or where am I? what furies me doo thus inchaunt?
O *Dydo*, wofull wretch, now deſtnyes fell thy head dooth haunt.

And a little after preparing to kyll her owne ſelfe.

But *Dydo* quaking fierce with frantike moode and grieſly hewe.
With trembling ſpotted cheekes, her huge attempting to perſue.
Beſides her ſelfe for rage, and towards death with viſage wanne,
Her eyes about ſhe rolde, as redde as blood they looked than.

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At laſt ready to fall vppon *Æneas* ſworde.

O happy (welaway) and ouer happy had I beene,
If neuer Troian ſhyps (ahlas) my Country ſhore had ſeene.
Thus ſayd ſhe wryde her head, and vnreuenged muſt we die?
But let vs boldly die (quoth ſhee) thus, thus to death I ply.

Nowe likewiſe for the braue warlike phraſe and bygge ſounding kynd of thundring ſpeeche, in the hotte ſkyrmyſhes of battels, you may confer them in any of the laſt fiue Bookes: for examples ſake, thys is one about the ninth Booke.

Et clamor totis per propugnacula muris,
Intendunt acries arcus, amentaque torquent.
Sternitur omne ſolum telis, tum ſcutæ cauæque
Dant ſonitum flictu galeæ: pugna asper ſurgit? etc.

A clamarous noyſe vpmounts on fortreſſe tops and bulwarks towres,
They ſtrike, they bend their bowes, they whirle from ſtrings ſharp ſhoting ſhowres.
All ſtreetes with tooles are ſtrowed, than helmets, ſkulles, with battrings marrd.
And ſhieldes diſhyuering cracke, vpriſeth roughneſſe byckring hard
Looke how the tempeſt ſtorme when wind out wraſtling blowes at ſouth,
Raine ratling beates the grownde, or clowdes of haile from Winters mouth,
Downe daſhyng headlong driues, when God from ſkyes with grieſly ſteuen,
His watry ſhowres outwrings, and whirlwind clowdes downe breakes from heauen.

And ſo foorth much more of the like effect.

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Onely one compariſon more will I deſire you to marke at your leyſures, which may ſerue for all the reſt, that is, the deſcription of Fame, as it is in the 4. booke, towardes the end, of which it followeth thus.

Monſtrum horrendum ingens cui quot ſunt corpore plumæ
Tot vigilos oculi etc.

Monſter gaſtly great, for euery plume her carkaſſe beares,
Like number clearing eyes ſhe hath, like number harkning eares,
Like number tongues, and mouthes ſhe wagges, a wondrous thing to ſpeake,
At midnight foorth ſhee flyes, and vnder ſhade her ſound dooth ſqueake.
All night ſhe wakes, nor ſlumber ſweete doth take nor neuer ſleepes.
By dayes on houſes tops ſhee fits or gates of Townes ſhe keepes.
On watching Towres ſhe clymbes, and Cities great ſhe makes agaſt,
Both trueth and falſhood forth ſhe telles, and lyes abroade doth caſt.

But what neede I to repeate any more places? there is not one Booke among the twelue, which wyll not yeelde you moſt excellent pleaſure in conferring the tranſlation with the Coppie, and marking the gallant grace which our Engliſhe ſpeeche affoordeth. And in trueth the like compariſons, may you chooſe out through the whole tranſlations of the *Metamorphoſis* by Maſter *Golding* who (conſidering both their Coppyes) hath equally deſerued commendations for the beautifying of the Engliſh ſpeeche. It would be tedious to ſtay to rehearſe any places out of him nowe: let the other ſuffice to prooue, that the Engliſh tongue lacketh neyther variety nor currantneſſe of phraſe for any matter.

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I Wyll nowe ſpeake a little of an other kinde of poetical writing, which might notwithſtanding for the variableneſſe of the argument therein vſually handled, bee comprehended in thoſe kindes before declared: that is, the compyling *Eglogues*, as much to ſay as Goteheardes tales, becauſe they bee commonly Dialogues or ſpeeches framed or ſuppoſed betweene Sheepeheardes, Neteheardes, Goteheardes, or ſuch like ſimple men: in which kind of writing, many haue obtained as immortall prayſe and commendation, as in any other.

The cheefeſt of theſe is *Theocritus* in Greeke, next him, and almoſt the very ſame, is *Virgill* in Latin. After *Virgyl* in like ſort writ *Titus Calphurnius* and *Baptiſta Mantuan*, wyth many other both in Latine and other languages very learnedlye. Although the matter they take in hand ſeemeth commonlie in appearaunce rude and homely, as the vſuall talke of ſimple clownes: yet doo they indeede vtter in the ſame much pleaſaunt and profitable delight. For vnder theſe perſonnes, as it were in a cloake of ſimplicitie, they would eyther ſette foorth the prayſes of theyr freendes, without the note of flattery, or enueigh grieuouſly againſt abuſes, without any token of bytterneſſe.

Somwhat like vnto theſe works, are many peeces of *Chawcer*, but yet not altogether ſo poeticall. But nowe yet at ye laſt hath England hatched vppe one Poet of this ſorte, in my conſcience comparable with the beſt in any reſpect: euen Maſter *Sp*: Author of the *Sheepeheardes Calender*, whoſe trauell in that peece of Engliſh Poetrie, I thinke verely is ſo commendable, as none of equall iudgment can yeelde him leſſe prayſe

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for hys excellent ſkyll, and ſkylfull excellency ſhewed foorth in the ſame, then they would to eyther *Theocritus* or *Virgill*, whom in mine opinion, if the courſenes of our ſpeeche (I meane the courſe of cuſtome which he woulde not infringe) had beene no more let vnto him, then theyr pure natiue tongues were vnto them, he would haue (if it might be) ſurpaſſed them. What one thing is there in them ſo worthy admiration, whereunto we may not adioyne ſome thing of his, of equall deſert? Take *Virgil* and make ſome little compariſon betweene them, and iudge as ye ſhall ſee cauſe.

Virgill hath a gallant report of *Auguſtus* couertly compryſed in the firſt *Æglogue*: the like is in him, of her Maieſtie, vnder the name of *Eliza*. *Virgill* maketh a braue coloured complaint of vnſtedfaſt freendſhyppe in the perſon of *Corydon*: the lyke is him in his 5 *Æglogue*. Agayne behold the pretty Paſtorall contentions of *Virgill* in the third *Æglogue*: of him in ye eight *Eglogue*. Finally, either in compariſon with them, or reſpect of hys owne great learning, he may well were the Garlande, and ſteppe before ye beſt of all Engliſh Poets that I haue ſeene or hearde: for I thinke no leſſe deſerueth (thus ſayth *E*, *K* in hys commendations) hys wittineſſe in deuiſing, his pithi neſſe in vttering, his complaintes of loue ſo louely, his diſcourſes of pleaſure ſo pleaſantly, his Paſtrall rude nes, his Morrall wyſeneſſe, his due obſeruing of *decorum* euery where, in perſonages, in ſeaſon, in matter, in ſpeeche, and generally in all ſeemely ſimplicity, of handling hys matter and framing hys wordes. The occaſion of his worke is a warning to other young men, who being intangled in loue and youthful vanities, may learne to looke to themſelues in time, and to auoyde inconueniences which may breede if they be not in time preuented. Many good Morrall leſſons are therein contained, as the reuerence which young men owe to the aged in the ſecond *Eglogue*: the caueate or warning to beware a ſubtill profeſſor of

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freendſhippe in the fift *Eglogue*: the commendation of good Paſtors, and ſhame and diſprayſe of idle and ambitious Goteheardes in the ſeauenth, the looſe and retchleſſe lyuing of Popiſh Prelates in the ninth. The learned and ſweete complaynt of the contempt of learning vnder the name of Poetry in the tenth. There is alſo much matter vttered ſomewhat couertly, eſpecially ye abuſes of ſome whom he would not be too playne withall: in which, though it be not apparant to euery one, what hys ſpeciall meaning was, yet ſo ſkilfully is it handled, as any man may take much delight at hys learned conueyance, and picke out much good ſence in the moſt obſcureſt of it. Hys notable prayſe deſerued in euery parcell of that worke, becauſe I cannot expreſſe as I woulde and as it ſhould: I wyll ceaſe to ſpeake any more of, the rather becauſe I neuer hearde as yet any that hath reade it, which hath not with much admiration commended it. One only thing therein haue I hearde ſome curious heades call in queſtion: *viz*: the motion of ſome vnſauery loue, ſuch as in the ſixt *Eglogue* he ſeemeth to deale withall (which ſay they) is ſkant allowable to Engliſh eares, and might well haue beene left for the Italian defenders of loathſome beaſtlines, of whom perhappes he learned it: to thys obiection I haue often aunſwered and (I thinke truely) that theyr nyce opinion ouer ſhooteth the Poets meaning, who though hee in that as in other thinges, immitateth the auncient Poets, yet doth not meane, no more did they before hym, any diſordered loue, or the filthy luſt of the deuilliſh *Pederaſtice* taken in the worſe ſence, but rather to ſhewe howe the diſſolute life of young men intangled in loue of women, doo neglect the freendſhyp and league with their olde freendes and familiers. Why (ſay they) yet he ſhold gyue no occaſion of ſuſpition, nor offer to the viewe of Chriſtians, any token of ſuch filthineſſe, howe good ſoeuer hys meaning were: wherevnto I oppoſe the ſimple conceyte they haue of matters which concerne learning or wytt, wylling them to gyue

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Poets leaue to vſe theyr vayne as they ſee good: it is their ſoolyſh conſtruction, not hys wryting that is blameable. Wee muſt preſcrybe to no wryters, (much leſſe to Poets) in what ſorte they ſhould vtter theyr conceyts. But thys wyll be better diſcuſſed by ſome I hope of better abillity.

One other ſorte of Poeticall wryters remayneth yet to bee remembred, that is, The precepts of Huſbandry, learnedly compiled in Heroycall verſe. Such were the workes of *Heſiodus* in *Greeke*, and *Virgils Georgickes* in Latine. What memorable worke hath beene handled in immitation of theſe by any Engliſh Poet, I know not, (ſaue onely one worke of M. *Tuſſer*, a peece ſurely of great wytt and experience, and wythal very prettilye handled) And I thinke the cauſe why our Poets haue not trauayled in that behalfe, is eſpecially, for that there haue beene alwayes plenty of other wryters that haue handled the ſame argument very largely. Among whom Maſter *Barnabe Googe*, in tranſlating and enlarging the moſt profitable worke of *Heresbachius*, hath deſerued much commendation, as well for hys ſaythfull compyling and learned increaſing the noble worke, as for hys wytty tranſlation of a good part of the *Georgickes* of *Virgill* into Engliſh verſe.

Among all the tranſlations, which hath beene my fortune to ſee, I could neuer yet finde that worke of the *Georgicks* wholly performed. I remember once Abraham Flemming in his conuerſion of the *Eglogues*, promiſed to tranſlate and publiſhe it: whether he dyd or not I knowe not, but as yet I heard not of it. I my ſelfe wott well I beſtowed ſome time in it two or three yeeres ſince, turning it to that ſame Engliſh verſe, which other ſuch workes were in, though it were rudely: howe beit, I did it onely for mine owne vſe, and vppon certayne reſpectes towardes a Gentleman mine eſpeciall freende, to whom I was deſirous to ſhewe ſome token of duetifull good wyll, and not minding it ſhould goe farre abroade, conſidering howe ſlenderly I ranne it

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ouer, yet ſince then, hath one gott it in keeping, who as it is told me, eyther hath or wyll vnaduiſedly publiſhe it: which iniury though he meanes to doo me in myrth, yet I hope he wyll make me ſome ſuffycient recompence, or els I ſhall goe neere to watch hym the like or a worſe turne.

But concerning the matter of our Englyſh wryters, lett thys ſuffice: nowe ſhall ye heare my ſimple ſkyl in what I am able to ſay concerning the forme and manner of our Englyſhe verſe.

The moſt vſuall and frequented kind of our Engliſh Poetry hath alwayes runne vpon, and to this day is obſerued in ſuch equall number of ſyllables, and likenes of wordes, that in all places one verſe either immediatly, or by mutuall interpoſition, may be aunſwerable to an other both in proportion of length, and ending of lynes in the ſame Letters. Which rude kinde of verſe, though (as I touched before) it rather diſcrediteth our ſpeeche, as borrowed from the *Barbarians*, then furniſheth the ſame with any comely ornament: yet beeing ſo ingraffed by cuſtome, and frequented by the moſt parte, I may not vtterly diſſalowe it, leaſt I ſhould ſeeme to call in queſtion the iudgement of all our ſamous wryters, which haue wonne eternall prayſe by theyr memorable workes compyled in that verſe.

For my part therefore, I can be content to eſteeme it as a thing, the perfection whereof is very commendable, yet ſo as wyth others I could wyſh it were by men of learning and ability bettered, and made more artificiall, according to the woorthines of our ſpeeche.

The falling out of verſes together in one like ſounde, is commonly called in Engliſh, Ryme, taken from the Greeke worde Ρυθμος, which ſurely in my iudgment is verye abuſiuelye applyed to ſuch a ſence: and by thys, the vnworthineſſe of the thing may well appeare, in that wanting a proper name, wherby to be called, it borroweth a word farre exceeding the dignitye of it,

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and not appropriate to ſo rude or baſe a thing. For Ryme is properly, the iuſt proportion of a clauſe or ſentence, whether it be in proſe or meeter, aptly compriſed together: wherof there is both an naturall and an artificiall compoſition, in any manner or kynde of ſpeeche, eyther French, Italian, Spaniſh or Engliſh: and is propper not onely to Poets, but alſo to Readers, Oratours, Pleaders, or any which are to pronounce or ſpeake any thing in publike audience.

The firſt begynning of Ryme (as we nowe terme it) though it be ſomewhat auncient, yet nothing famous. In Greece (they ſay) one *Symias Rhodias*, becauſe he would be ſinguler in ſomthing, wryt poetically of the Fable, contayning howe *Iupiter* beeing in ſhape of a Swanne, begatte the Egge on Leda, wherof came Caſtor, Pollux, and Helena, whereof euery verſe ended in thys Ryme, and was called therefore ὠον but thys foolyſhe attempt was ſo contemned and diſpyſed, that the people would neither admitte the Author nor Booke any place in memory of learning. Since that it was not heardè of, till ye time ye *Hunnes* and *Gothians* renued it agayne, and brought it into Italie. But howſoeuer or whereſoeuer it beganne, certayne it is, that in our Engliſh tongue it beareth as good grace, or rather better, then in any other: and is a faculty whereby many may and doo deſerue great prayſe and commendation, though our ſpeeche be capable of a farre more learned manner of verſifying, as I wyl partly declare heereafter.

There be three ſpeciall notes neceſſary to be obſerued in the framing of our accuſtomed Engliſh Ryme: the firſt is, that one meeter or verſe be aunſwerable to an other, in equall number of feete or ſyllables, or proportionable to the tune whereby it is to be reade or meaſured. The ſeconde, to place the words in ſuch ſorte, as none of them be wreſted contrary to the naturall inclination or affectation of the ſame, or more truely ye true quantity thereof. The thyrd, to make them fall together mutually in Ryme, that is, in wordes

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of like ſounde, but ſo as the wordes be not diſordered for the Rymes ſake, nor the ſence hindered. Theſe be the moſt pryncipall obſeruations, which I thinke requiſite in an Engliſh verſe: for as for the other ornaments which belong thereto, they be more properly belonging to the ſeuerall gyfts of ſkylfull Poets, then common notes to be preſcribed by me: but ſomewhat perhaps I ſhall haue occaſion to ſpeake heereafter.

Of the kyndes of Engliſh verſes which differ in number of ſyllables, there are almoſt infinite: which euery way alter according to hys fancy, or to the meaſure of that meeter, wherein it pleaſeth hym to frame hys ditty. Of the beſt and moſt frequented I wyll rehearſe ſome. The longeſt verſe in length, which I haue ſeene vſed in Engliſh conſiſteth of ſixteene ſyllables, eache two verſes ryming together, thus.

Wher vertue wants and vice abounds, there wealth is but a bayted hooke,
To make men swallow down their bane, before on danger deepe they looke.

Thys kynde is not very much vſed at length thus, but is commonly deuided, eche verſe into two, whereof eche ſhal containe eyght ſyllables, and ryme croſſe wyſe, the firſt to the thyrd, and the ſecond to the fourth, in this manner.

Great wealth is but a bayted hooke.
VVhere vertue wants, and vice aboundes:
VVhich men deuoure before they looke,
So them in daungers deepe it drownes.

An other kynd next in length to thys, is, where eche verſe hath fourteene ſyllables, which is the moſt accuſtomed of all other, and eſpecially vſed of all the tranſlatours of the Latine Poets for the moſt part thus.

My mind with furye fierce inflamde of late I know not howe,
Doth burne Parnaſſus hyll to ſee, adornd wyth Lawrell bowe.

Which may likewyſe and ſo it often is deuyded, eche

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verſe into two, to [the?] firſt hauing eyght ſillables, the ſecond ſixe, wherof the two ſixes ſhall alwayes ryme, and ſometimes the eyghtes, ſometimes not, according to the wyll of the maker.

My minde with furye fierce inflamde,
Of late I knowe not howe:
Doth burne *Pernaſſus* hyll to ſee,
Adornd wyth Lawrell bowe.

There are nowe wythin this compaſſe, as many ſortes of verſes as may be deuiſed differences of numbers: wherof ſome conſiſt of equall proportions, ſome of long and ſhort together, ſome of many rymes in one ſtaffe (as they call it) ſome of croſſe ryme, ſome of counter ryme, ſome ryming wyth one worde farre diſtant from another, ſome ryming euery thyrd or fourth word, and ſo likewyſe all manner of dytties applyable to euery tune that may be ſung or ſayd, diſtinct from proſe or continued ſpeeche. To auoyde therefore tediouſneſſe and confuſion, I wyll repeate onely the different ſortes of verſes out of the *Sheepeheardes Calender*, which may well ſerue to beare authoritie in thys matter.

There are in that worke twelue or thirteene ſundry ſorts of verſes, which differ eyther in length, or ryme, of deſtinction of the ſtaues: but of them which differ in length or number of ſillables not paſt ſixe or ſeauen. The firſt of them is of tenne ſillables, or rather fiue feete in one verſe, thus,

A Sheepheards boy no better doo him call,
When Winters waſtfull ſpight was almoſt ſpent.

This verſe he vſeth commonly in hys ſweete complayntes, and mornefull ditties, as very agreeable to ſuch affections.

The ſecond ſort hath naturally but nyne ſyllables, and is a more rough or clowniſh manner of verſe, vſed moſt commonly of him if you mark him in hys

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ſatyricall reprehenſions, and his Sheepeheardes homelyeſt talke, ſuch as the ſecond *Æglogue* is.

Ah for pitty wyll rancke Winters rage,
Theſe bytter blaſts neuer gynne to aſſwage.

The number of nine ſillables in thys verſe is very often altered, and ſo it may without any diſgrace to the ſame, eſpecially where the ſpeeche ſhould be moſt clowniſh and ſimple, which is much obſerued of hym.

The third kynd is a pretty rounde verſe, running currantly together, commonly ſeauen ſillables or ſometime eyght in one verſe, as many in the next, both ryming together: euery two hauing one the like verſe after them, but of rounder wordes, and two of them likewyſe ryming mutually. That verſe expreſſeth notably, light and youthfull talke, ſuch as is the thyrde *Æglogue* betweene two Sheepheardes boys concerning loue.

Thomalin why ſitten we ſo
As weren ouerwent with woe
Vpon ſo fayre a morrowe?
The ioyous time now nigheth faſt
That wyll allay this bitter blaſt
And ſlake the Winter ſorrow.

The fourth ſort containeth in eche ſtaffe manie vnequall verſes, but moſt ſweetelie falling together: which the Poet calleth the tune of the waters fall. Therein is his ſong In prayſe of *Eliza*.

Ye daintie Nymphes which in this bleſſed brooke
doo bathe your breſt,
Forſake your watrie bowres and hether looke,
at my requeſt.
And eke yee Virgins that on *Parnaſs* dwell,
Whence floweth *Helicon* the learned Well,
helpe me to blaze
her woorthy praiſe
That in her ſex doth all excell. etc.

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The fift, is a deuided verſe of twelue ſillables into two verſes, whereof I ſpake before, and ſeemeth moſt meete for ye handling of a Morrall matter, ſuch as is the praiſe of good Paſtors, and the diſpraiſe of ill in the ſeauenth *Æglogue*.

The ſixt kinde, is called a round, beeing mutuallie ſung betweene two: one ſingeth one verſe, the other the next, eche rymeth with himſelfe.

Per. It fell vppon a holie eue
Wyl. Hey ho holliday
Per. When holie fathers wont to ſhrieue,
Wyl. Thus ginneth our Rondelay. etc.

The ſeauenth ſorte is a verie tragicall mournefull meaſure, wherein he bewayleth the death of ſome freend vnder the perſon of *Dydo*.

Vp then *Melpomene* the mournfulſt Muſe of nyne,
ſuch cauſe of mourning neuer hadſt afore:
Vp grieſly ghoſtes, and vp my mournfull ryme:
matter of myrth now ſhalt thou haue no more.
Dydo my deere alas is dead,
Dead and lyeth wrapt in leade:
O heauie hearſe
Let ſtreaming teares be powred out in ſtore
O careſull vearſe.

Theſe ſortes of verſes for breuities ſake haue I choſen foorth of him, whereby I ſhall auoide the tedious rehearſall of all the kindes which are vſed: which I thinke would haue beene vnpoſſible, ſeeing they may be altered to as manie formes as the Poets pleaſe: neither is there anie tune or ſtroke which may be ſung or plaide on inſtruments, which hath not ſome poetical ditties framed according to the numbers thereof: ſome to Rogero, ſome to Trenchmore, to downe right Squire, to Galliardes, to Pauines, to Iygges, to Brawles, to all manner of tunes which euerie Fidler knowes better then my ſelfe, and therefore I will let them paſſe.

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Againe, the diuerſities of the ſtaues (which are the number of verſes contained with the diuiſions or partitions of a ditty) doo often times make great differences in theſe verſes. As when one ſtáffe containeth but two verſes, or (if they bee deuided) foure: the firſt or the firſt couple hauing twelue ſillables, the other fourteene, which verſifyers call Powlters meaſure, becauſe ſo they tall[i]e their wares by dozens. Alſo, when one ſtaffe hath manie verſes, whereof eche one rimeth to the next, or mutuallie croſſe, or diſtant by three, or by foure, or ended contrarye to the beginning, and a hundred ſortes, whereof to ſhewe ſeuerall examples, would bee too troubleſome: nowe for the ſecond point.

The naturall courſe of moſt Engliſh verſes ſeemeth to run vppon the olde Iambicke ſtroake, and I may well thinke by all likelihoode, it had the beginning thereof. For if you marke the right quantitie of our vſuall verſes, ye ſhall perceiue them to containe in ſound ye very propertie of Iambick feete, as thus.

ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ —
I that my ſlender oaten pipe in verſe was wont to ſounde:

For tranſpoſe anie of thoſe feete in pronouncing, and make ſhort either the two, foure, ſixe, eight, tenne, twelue ſillable, and it will (doo what you can) fall out very abſurdly.

Againe, though our wordes can not well bee forced to abyde the touch of *Poſition* and other rules of *Proſodia*, yet is there ſuch a naturall force or quantity in eche worde, that it will not abide anie place but one, without ſome foule diſgrace: as for example try anie verſe, as thys,

ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ — ŭ —
Of ſhapes tranſformde to bodies ſtrange I purpoſe to intreate.

Make the firſt ſillable long, or the third, or the fift and ſo ſoorth: or contrariwiſe make the other ſillables to admitte the ſhortneſſe of one of them places, and ſee

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what a wonderfull defacing it wil be to the wordes, as thus.

— ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ —∪ — ∪
Of ſtrange bodies tranſformd to ſhapes purpoſe I to intreat.

So that this is one eſpeciall thing to be taken heede of in making a good Engliſh verſe, that by diſplacing no worde bee wreſted againſt his naturall propriety, wherevnto you ſhal perceyue eche worde to be affected, and may eaſilie diſcerne it in wordes of two ſillables or aboue, though ſome there be of indifferencie, that wyll ſtand in any place. Againe, in chouching the whole ſentence, the like regarde is to be had, that wee exceede not too boldly in placing the verbe out of his order, and too farre behinde the nowne: which the neceſſitie of Ryme may oftentimes vrge. For though it be tollerable in a verſe to ſette wordes ſo extraordinarily as other ſpeeche will not admitt, yet heede is to be taken, leaſt by too much affecting that manner, we make both the verſe vnpleaſant and the ſence obſcure. And ſure it is a wonder to ſee the folly of manie in this reſpect, that vſe not onely too much of thys ouerthwart placing, or rather diſplacing of wordes, in theyr Poemes and verſes, but alſo in theyr proſe or continued writings: where they thinke to rolle moſt ſmoothlie, and flow moſt eloquently, there by this means, come foorth theyr ſentences dragging at one Authors tayle as they were tyde together with poynts, where often you ſhall tarrie (ſcratching your heade) a good ſpace before you ſhall heare hys principall verbe or ſpeciall word, leaſte hys ſinging grace, which in his ſentence is contained ſhould be leſſe, and his ſpeeche ſeeme nothing poeticall.

The thyrd obſeruation is, the Ryme or like ending of verſes: which though it is of leaſt importance, yet hath won ſuch credite among vs, that of all other it is moſt regarded of the greateſt part of Readers. And ſurely as I am perſwaded, the regarde of wryters to this, hath beene the greateſt decay of that good order of verſifying, which might ere this haue beene eſtabliſhed

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in our ſpeeche. In my iudgment, if there be any ornament in the ſame, it is rather to be attributed to the plentifull fulneſſe of our ſpeeche, which can affoorde ryming words ſufficient for the handling of any matter, then to the thing it ſelfe for any beautifying it bringeth to a worke: which might bee adorned with farre more excellent collours then ryming is. Notwithſtanding I cannot but yeelde vnto it (as cuſtome requireth) the deſerued prayſes, eſpecially where it is with good iudgement ordered. And I thinke them right worthy of admiration, for their readines and plenty of wytt and capacity, who can with facility intreate at large, and as we call it *extempore*, in good and ſencible ryme, vppon ſome vnacquainted matter.

The ready ſkyll of framing anie thing in verſe, beſides the naturall promptneſſe which many haue therevnto, is much helped by Arte, and exerciſe of the memory: for as I remember, I reade once among *Gaskoynes* workes, a little inſtruction to verſifying, where is preſcribed as I thinke thys courſe of learning to verſifye in Ryme.

When ye haue one verſe well ſetled, and decently ordered which you may diſpoſe at your pleaſure, to ende it with what word you wyll: then what ſoeuer the word is, you may ſpeedilie runne ouer the other wordes which are aunſwerable therevnto, (for more readines through all the letters Alphabetically) whereof you may chooſe that which wyll beſt fitte the ſence of your matter in that place: as for example: if your laſt worde ende in Booke, you may ſtraightwayes in your minde runne them ouer thus. Brooke, Cooke, crooke, hooke, looke, nooke, pooke, rooke, forſooke, tooke, awooke etc. Nowe it is twenty to one, but alwayes one of theſe ſhall iumpe with your former worde and matter in good ſence. If not, then alter the firſt.

And indeede I thinke, that next to the Arte of memory, thys is the readyeſt way to attaine to the faculty of ryming well Extempore, eſpecially if it be helped with thus much paynes. Gather together all

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manner of wordes eſpecially *Monaſillables*, and place them Alphabetically in ſome note, and either haue them meetely perfectly by hart (which is no verye labourſome matter) or but looke them dilligently ouer at ſome time, practiſing to ryme indifferent often, whereby I am perſwaded it wil ſoone be learned, ſo as the party haue withall any reaſonable gyft of knowledge and learning, whereby hee want not bothe matter and wordes altogether.

What the other circumſtaunces of Ryming are, as what wordes may tollerably be placed in Ryme, and what not: what words doo beſt become a Ryme, and what not, how many ſortes of Ryme there is: and ſuch like I wyll not ſtay nowe to intreate. There be many more obſeruations and notes to be preſcribed, to the exacte knowledge of verſifying, which I truſt wilbe better and larger laide forth by others, to whom I deferre manie conſiderations in this treatiſe: hoping that ſome of greater ſkill will ſhortlie handle this matter in better ſorte.

Nowe the ſundry kindes of rare deuiſes, and pretty inuentions which come from ye fine poeticall vaine of manie in ſtrange and vnacuſtomed manner, if I could report them, it were worthie my trauell: ſuch are the turning of verſes: the infolding of wordes: the fine repititions: the clarklie conueying of contraries, and manie ſuch like. Whereof though I coulde ſette downe manie: yet becauſe I want bothe manie and the beſt kindes of them, I will ouerpaſſe: onelie pointing you to one or two which may ſuffice for example.

Looke vppon the rufull ſong of *Colin* ſung by *Cuddie* in the *Sheepheardes Calender*, where you ſhall ſee a ſinguler rare deuiſe of a dittie framed vpon theſe ſixe wordes *VVoe, ſounde, cryes, paſt, ſleep, augment*, which are moſt prettilie turned and wounde vppe mutually together, expreſſing wonderfully the doleſulneſſe of the ſong. A deuiſe nôt much vnlike vntò the ſame, is vſed by ſome, who taking the laſt wordes of a certaine number of verſes, as it were by the rebound

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of an *Echo*, ſhall make them fall out in ſome prettie ſence.

Of this ſorte there are ſome deuiſed by *Iohn Graunge*, which becauſe they be not long I wyll rehearſe one.

If ſeare oppreſſe howe then may hope me ſhielde?
Denyall ſayes, vayne hope hath pleaſed well,
But as ſuch hope thou wouldeſt not be thine,
So would I not the like to rule my hart.
For if thou loueſt it bidds thee graunt forthwith
Which is the ioy whereof I liue in hope.

Here if you take the laſt worde of euerie verſe, and place them orderlie together, you ſhall haue this ſentence: *Shielde well thyne hart with hope.* But of theſe *Echoes* I knowe indeede verie daintie peeces of worke, among ſome of the fineſt Poets this day in London: who for the rareneſſe of them keepe them priuelie to themſelues, and wil not let them come abroad.

A like inuention to the laſt rehearſed, or rather a better, haue I ſeene often practiſed in framing a whole dittie to the Letters of ones name, or to the wordes of ſome two or three verſes which is very witty, as for example this is one of *W. Hunnis*, which for the ſhortnes I rather chuſde then ſome yat are better.

If thou deſire to liue in quiet reſt,
Gyue eare and ſee, but ſay the beſt.

Theſe two verſes are nowe as it were reſolued into dyuers other, euery two wordes or ſillables being the beginning of an other like verſe, in this ſort.

If thou delight in quietnes of life,
Deſire to ſhunne from brawles, debate and ſtrife:
To liue in loue with G O D, with freend and foe,
In rest ſhalt ſleepe when other cannot ſo.

Gyue eare to all, yet doo not all beleeue,
And ſee the end and then thy ſentence gyue:
But ſay For trueth of happy liues aſſignde
The best hath he that quiet is in minde.

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Thus are there infinite ſortes of fine conueiances (as they may be termed) to be vſed, and are much frequented by verſifyers, as well in compoſition of their verſe, as the wittines of their matter: which all I will referre to the conſideration of euerie pleaſant headded Poet in their proper gifts: onelie I ſett downe theſe fewe ſortes of their formes of verſifying, which may ſtand in ſteede to declare what manie others may be deuiſed in like ſorte.

But nowe to proceede to the reformed kind of Engliſh verſe which manie haue before this, attempted to put in practiſe, and to eſtabliſh for an accuſtomed right among Engliſh Poets, you ſhall heare in like manner my ſimple iudgment concerning the ſame.

I am fully and certainlie perſwaded, that if the true kind of verſifying in immitation of Greekes and Latines, had beene practiſed in the Engliſh tongue, and put in vre from time to tyme by our Poets, who might haue continually beene mending and pollyſhing the ſame, euery one according to their ſeuerall giftes: it would long ere this haue aſpyred to as full perfection, as in anie other tongue whatſoeuer. For why may I not thinke ſo of our Engliſh, ſeeing that among the Romaines a long time, yea euen till the dayes of *Tully*, they eſteemed not the Latine Poetrie almoſt worth any thing, in reſpecte of the Greeke, as appeareth in the Oration *pro Archia Poeta*: yet afterwardes it increaſed in credite more and more, and that in ſhort ſpace: ſo that in *Virgilles* time, wherein were they not comparable with the Greekes? So likewiſe, now it ſeemeth not currant for an Engliſh verſe to runne vpon true quantity, and thoſe ſeete which the Latines vſe, becauſe it is ſtraunge, and the other barbarous cuſtome, beeing within compaſſe of euery baſe witt, hath worne it out of credite or eſtimation. But if our wryters, beeing of learning and iudgment, would rather infringe thys curious cuſtome, then omitte the occaſion of inlarging the credite of their natiue ſpeeche, and theyr owne prayſes, by practiſing that commendable

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kind of wryting in true verſe: then no doubt, as in other partes of learning, ſo in Poetry, ſhoulde not ſtoupe to the beſt of them all in all maner of ornament and comlineſſe. But ſome obiect that our wordes are nothing reſemblaunt in nature to theirs, and therefore not poſſible to bee framed with any good grace after their vſe: but cannot we then as well as the Latines did, alter the cannon of the rule according to the quality of our worde, and where our wordes and theyrs wyll agree, there to iumpe with them, where they will not agree, there to eſtabliſh a rule of our owne to be directed by? Likewiſe, for ye tenor of the verſe might we not (as *Horace* dyd in the Latine) alter their proportions to what ſortes we liſted, and to what we ſawe wold beſt become the nature of the thing handled, or the quallity of the words? Surely it is to be thought that if any one, of ſound iudgment and learning, ſhoulde putt foorth ſome famous worke, contayning dyuers formes of true verſes, fitting the meaſures, according to the matter: it would of it ſelfe be a ſufficient authority without any preſcription of rules, to the moſt part of Poets, for them to follow and by cuſtome to ratify. For ſure it is, that the rules and principles of Poetry, were not preciſely followed and obſerued of the firſt beginners and wryters of Poetry, but were ſelected and gathered ſeuerally out of theyr workes, for the direction and behoofe of their followers. And indeede, he that ſhall with heedefull iudgment make tryall of the Engliſh wordes, ſhall not finde them ſo groſſe or vnapt, but that they wyll become any one of ye moſt accuſtomed ſortes of Latine or Greeke verſes meetely, and run thereon ſomewhat currantly.

I my ſelfe, with ſimple ſkyll I confeſſe, and farre vnable iudgment, haue ventured on a fewe, which notwithſtanding the rudenes of them may ſerue to ſhewe what better might bee brought into our ſpeeche, if thoſe which are of meete abilitye woulde beſtowe ſome trauell and endeuour thereuppon. But before I ſette them downe, I wyll ſpeake ſomewhat of ſuch obſeruations as

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I could gather neceſſary to the knowledge of theſe kinde of verſes, leaſt I ſhould ſeeme to runne vpon them raſhly, without regarde either of example or authority.

The ſpeciall poyntes of a true verſe, are the due obſeruations of the feete, and place of the feete.

The foote of a verſe, is a meaſure of two ſillables, or of three, diſtinguiſhed by time which is eyther long or ſhort. A foote of two ſillables, is eyther ſimple or mixt, that is, of like time or of diuers. A ſimple foote of two ſillables is likewiſe twofolde, eyther of two long ſillables called *Spondæus*, as – – *goodneſſe*, or of two ſhort called *Pyrrichius* as ∪ ∪ *hyther*. A myxt foote of 2. ſillables, is eyther of one ſhort and one long called *Iambus* as ∪ – *dying*: or of one long and one ſhort, called *Choreus* as – ∪ *gladly*. A foote of 3. ſillables in like ſorte is either ſimple or myxt. The ſimple is eyther *Moloſſus*, that is of three long, as – – – *forgiue-nes*: or *Trochæus*, that is of 3. ſhort, as ∪ ∪ ∪ *merylie*. The mixt is of 6. diuers ſortes, 1. *Dactylus*, of one long, and two ſhort, as – ∪ ∪ *happily*. 2. *Anapætus*, of two ſhorte, and one long, as ∪ ∪ – *t[r]auelers*. 3. *Bacchius*, of one ſhort, and two long, as ∪ – – *remembrers*. 4. *Palimbachius*, of two long and one ſhort, as – – ∪ *accorded*. 5. *Creticus* of a long, a ſhort, and a long, – ∪ – *daungerous*. 6. *Amphibrachus*, of a ſhort, a long, and a ſhort, as ∪ – ∪ *reioyced*.

Many more deuiſions of feete are vſed by ſome, but theſe doo more artificially comprehende all quantities neceſſary to the ſkanning of any verſe, according to *Tallæus* in hys Rethorique. The place of the feete is the diſpoſing of them in theyr propper roomes, whereby may be diſcerned the difference of eche verſe which is the right numbring of the ſame. Now as for the quantity of our wordes, therein lyeth great difficultye, and the cheefeſt matter in this faculty. For in truth there being ſuch diuerſity betwixt our words and the Latine, it cannot ſtande indeede with great reaſon that they ſhoulde frame, wee beeing onelie directed by ſuch rules

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as ſerue for onely Latine words, yet notwithſtanding one may well perceiue by theſe fewe, that theſe kinde of verſes would well become the ſpeeche, if ſo bee there were ſuch Rules preſcribed, as woulde admitt the placing of your apteſt and fulleſt wordes together. For indeede excepting a fewe, of our *Monaſyllables*, which naturally ſhoulde moſt of them be long, we haue almoſt none, that wyll ſtande fitlie in a ſhort foote: and therfore if ſome exception were made againſt the preciſe obſeruation of *Poſition*, and certaine other of the rules, then might we haue as great plenty and choyſe of good woordes to furniſh and ſette foorth a verſe, as in any other tongue.

Likewiſe if there were ſome derection in ſuch wordes, as fall not within the compaſſe of Greeke or Latine rules, it were a great helpe, and therefore I had great miſſe in theſe few which I made. Such as is the laſt ſillable in theſe wordes, *able*, *noble*, or *poſſible* and ſuch like: againe for the nature and force of our *W.* of our *th*, of our *oo*, and *ee*, of our wordes which admytte an *e* in the ende after one or two Conſonantes, and many other. I for my part, though (I muſt needes confeſſe) many faultes eſcaped me in theſe fewe, yet tooke I as good heede as I coulde, and in trueth did rather alwaies omitt the beſt wordes and ſuch as would naturally become the ſpeech beſt, then I wolde committe any thing, which ſhoulde notoriouſly impugne the Latine rules, which herein I had onely for my direction. Indeede moſt of our *Monaſyllables* I am forced to make ſhort, to ſupply the want of many ſhort wordes requiſite in theſe verſes. The Participle *A*, being but the Engliſh article adioyned to Nownes, I alwayes make ſhort, both alone and in compoſition, and likewiſe the wordes of one ſillable ending in *E*, as *the*, when it is an article, *he*, *ſhe*, *ye*, etc. *we* I thinke ſhould needes be alwayes long becauſe we pronounce continually *VVe*. *I*, beeing alone ſtanding for the Pronowne *Ego*, in my iudgment might well be vſed common: but becauſe I neuer ſawe it vſed but ſhort I ſo obſerued it. Words ending in *y*

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I make ſhort without doubt, ſauing that I haue marked in others one difference which they vſe in the ſame, that is to make it ſhort in the ende ŏ of an Aduerb, as *gladly*, and long in the ende – of an Adiectiue as *goodly*: but the reaſon is as I take it, becauſe the Adiectiue is or ſhould be moſt commonly written thus *goodlie*. *O*, beeing an Aduerbe is naturally long: in the ende of wordes both *Monaſyllables* and other I thinke it may be vſed common. The firſt of *Pollifyllables* I directed according to the nature of the worde, as I thought moſt aunſwerable to Latine examples, ſauing that ſomewhere I am conſtrayned to ſtraine curteſy with the prepoſition of a worde compounded or ſuch like, which breaketh no great ſquare: as in *defence* or *depart*, etc. The myddle ſillables which are not very many, come for the moſt part vnder the precinct of *Poſition*, whereof ſome of them will not poſſibly abide the touch, and therfore muſt needes be a little wreſted: ſuch are commonly ye Aduerbs of three ſillables, as *mournfully*, *ſpyghtfully* and ſuch like words, deriued of this Adiectiue, *full*: and therfore if there be great occaſion to vſe them, they muſt be reformed by detracting onely (*l*) and then they ſtand meetely currant, as *mournfuly*. The laſt ſillables I wholly directed ſo neere as I could to the touch of common rules.

The moſt famous verſe of all the reſt, is called *Hexametrum Epicum*, which conſiſteth of ſixe feete, wherof the firſt foure are indifferently either *Spondæi* or *Dactyli*, the fift is euermore a *dactyl*, aud the ſixt a *Spondæ*, as thus.

— ŏ — — ŏ ŏ — — — — — ŏ ŏ — —

Tyterus happily thou liest tumbling vnder a beetchtree.

Thys kinde of verſe I haue onely ſeene to be practiſed in our Engliſh ſpeeche: and indeede wyll ſtand ſomewhat more orderlye therein then any of the other kindes, vntill we haue ſome tolleration of wordes made by ſpeciall rule. The firſt that attempted to practiſe thys verſe in Engliſh, ſhould ſeeme to be the Earle of *Surry*, who tranſlated ſome part of *Virgill* into verſe

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indeede, but without regard of true quantity of ſillables. There is one famous *Diſtichon*, which is common in the mouthes of all men, that was made by one Maſter *VVatſon*, fellowe of S. *Iohns* Colledge in Cambrydge about 40. yeeres paſt, which for the ſweetnes and gallantnes therof in all reſpects doth mat[c]h and ſurpaſſe the Latine coppy of *Horace*, which he made out of *Homers* wordes, *qui mores hominum etc.*

— ◡ ◡ — — — ◡ ◡ — — — ◡ ◡— —
All trauellers doo gladlie report great praiſe to Vliſſes

— ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — — — — ◡ ◡ — —
For that he knewe manie mens maners, and ſavv many cities.

Which two verſes if they be examined throughout all the rules and obſeruations of the beſt verſifying, ſhall bee founde to attaine the very perfection of them all. There be two other not much inferiour to theſe, which I found in ye Gloſſe of *E. K.* vppon the fift *Æglogue* of the newe Poet: which Tully tranſlated out of Greeke into Latine, *Hæc habui quæ edi etc.*

All that I eate did I ioy and all that I greedilie gorged.

— — — ◡ ◡ — — — — — ◡ ◡ — —
As for thoſe manie goodlie matters left I for others.

Which though they wyll not abide the touch of *Synalæpha* in one or two places, yet perhappes ſome Engliſh rule which might wyth good reaſon be eſtabliſhed, would make them currant enough, and auoyde that inconuenience which is very obuious in our wordes. The great company of famous verſes of thys ſort, which Maſter *Haruey* made, is not vnknowne to any and are to be viewed at all times. I for my part, ſo farre as thoſe examples would leade me, and mine owne ſmall ſkyll affoorde me, haue blundered vppon theſe fewe, whereinto I haue tranſlated the two firſt Æglogues of Virgill: becauſe I thought no matter of mine owne inuention, nor any other of antiquitye more fitte for tryal of thys thyng, before there were ſome more ſpeciall direction, which might leade to a leſſe troubleſome manner of wryting.

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The Argument of the firſt *Æglogue.*

Vnder the perſonne of *Tityrus Vyrgill* beeing figured himſelfe, declareth to *Melibeus* an nother Neateheard, the great benefittes he receyued at *Auguſtus* hand, who in the ſpoyle of *Mantua* gaue him hys goods and ſubſtaunce againe.

Melibæus. Tityrus.

TItyrus, happilie thou lyste tumbling vnder a beech tree,
All in a fine oate pipe theſe ſweete ſongs luſtilie chaunting:
VVe, poore ſoules goe to wracke, and from theſe coastes be remooued,
And fro our pastures ſweete: thou Tityr, at eaſe in a shade plott
Makst thicke groues to reſound vvith ſonges of braue Amarillis.

Tityrus.

O Melibæus, *he vvas no man but a God vvho releeude me:*
Euer he shalbe my God: from this ſame Sheepcot his alters
Neuer, a tender Lambe ſhall vvant, with blood to bedevv them.
This good gift did he giue, to my steeres thus freelie to vvander,
And to my ſelfe (thou ſeest) on pipe to reſound vvhat I liſted.

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Melibaeus.

Grutch thee ſure I doo not, but this thing makes me to vvonder,
VVhence comes all this adoo: vvith grieeuous paine not a little
Can I remooue my Goates: here, Tityre skant get I forvvard
Poore olde crone, tvvo tvvyns at a clappe ith boyſterous haſilles
Left ſhe behind, best hope i' my flock laid hard on a bare stone.
Had not a luckleſſe lotte poſſest our mindes, I remember
VVarnings oft fro the blaſt burnt oake vve favv to be ſent vs.
Oft did a left hand crovv foretell theſe thinges in her hull tree,
But this God let vs heare what he vvas, good Tityre tell me.

Tityrus.

That fame Cittie ſo braue vvhich Rome vvas vvont to be called,
Foole did I thinke, to be like this of ours, vvhere vve to the pastures
VVonted were to remooue from dammes our young prettie Cattell.
Thus did I thinke young vvhelpes, and Kids to be like to the mothers,
Thus did I vvont compare manie great thinges vvith many little.
But this aboue all tovvnes as loftily mounteth her high head,
As by the lovve baſe shrubbes tall Cypreſſe shooteth aboue them.

Melibaeus.

And vvhat did thee mooue that needes thou must goe to ſee Rome?

Tityrus.

Freedome: vvhich though late, yet once lookt backe to my pore ſtate,
After time vvhen haires from my beard did ginne to be vvhitish:
Yet lookt back at laſt and found me out after a long time.
VVhen Amarill *vvas once obtainde,* Galatea *departed:*
For (for I vvill confeſſe) vvhilst as Galatea *did hold mee,*
Hope did I not for freedome, and care had I none to my cattell.
Though manie faire young beastes our folde for the aulters aforded

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And manie cheeſes good fro my preſſe vvere ſent to the Cittie:
Seldome times did I bring anie store of pence fro the markett.

Melibaeus.

O Amarill, *vvherefore, to thy Gods (very much did I meruaile)*
Heauilie thou didſt praie: ripe fruites vngathered all still:
Tityrus is not at home: theſe Pyne trees Tityre miſt thee.
Fountaines longd for thee: theſe hedgrovves vvisht thy return home

Tityrus.

VVhat vvas then to bedoone? from bondage could not I vvind out:
Neither I could haue found ſuch gentle Gods any vvhere els.
There did I ſee (Melibœe) that youth vvhoſe hestes I by courſe still.
Fortnights vvhole to obſerue on the Alters ſure will I not faile.
Thus did he gentlie graunt to my ſute when first I demaunded.
Keepe your heardes poore ſlaues as erst, let bulles to the makes still.

Melibaeus.

Happy olde man, then thou ſhalt haue thy farme to remaine still,
Large and large to thy ſelfe, others nought but stonie grauell:
And foule ſlymie rush wherewith their lees be beſprinkled.
Here no vnwoonted foode ſhall grieue young theaues who be laded,
Nor the infections foule of neighbours flocke ſhall annoie them.
Happie olde man. In ſhaddowy bankes and coole prettie places,
Heere by the quainted floodes and ſprings most holie remaining.
Here, theſe quickſets freſh which lands ſeuer out fro thy neighbors
And greene willow rowes which Hiblœ bees doo reioice in,
Oft fine whistring noiſe, ſhall bring ſweete ſleepe to thy ſences.
Vnder a Rock ſide here will proyner chaunt merrie ditties.
Neither on highe Elme trees, thy beloude Doues loftilie ſitting,
Nor prettie Turtles trim, vvill ceaſe to crooke with a good cheere.

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Tityrus.

First, therefore ſwift buckes ſhall flie for foode to the skies ward,
And from fish with drawn broade ſeas themſelues shal auoid hence:
First, (both borders broke) Araris ſhal run to the Parthanes,
And likewiſe Tygris shall againe runne backe to the Germanes:
Ere his countnaunce ſweete shall ſlippe once out from my hartroote.

Melibaeus.

VVe poore ſoules, muſt ſome to the land cald Affrica packe hence.
Some to the farre Scythia, and ſome must to the ſwift flood Oaxis.
Some to Britannia coaſtes quite parted farre fro the whole world.
Oh theſe paſtures pure shall I nere more chance to behold yee?
And our cottage poore with warme turues couerd about trim.
Oh theſe trim tilde landes, ſhall a rechleſſe ſouldier haue them?
And ſhall a Barbarian haue this croppe? ſee what a miſchiefe
Diſcord vile hath araiſde? for whom was our labour all tooke?
Nouv Melibœe ingraft pearie stocks, ſette vines in an order.
Now goe (my braue flocke once that were) O now goe my kidlings.
Neuer againe ſhall I now in a greene bowre ſweetelie repoſed
See ye in queachie briers farre a loofe clambring on a high hill.
Now ſhall I ſing no Iygges, nor whilst I doo fall to my iunkets.
Shall ye my Goates, cropping ſweete flowres and leaues ſit about me.

Tityrus.

Yet thou maist tarrie heere, and keepe me companie this night,
All on a leauie couch: good Aples ripe I doo not lacke,
Chestnutts ſweete good store, and plentie of curddes will I ſet thee.
Marke i' the Towne how chimnie tops doo beginne to be ſmoaking,
And fro the Mountaines high how ſhaddowes grow to be larger.

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The ſeconde Æglogue called *Alexis.*

The Argument.

Virgill in the perſonne of *Corydon* as ſome thinke, complayneth that he is not ſo gratious with Auguſtus as he would bee: or els it is to be referred to a youth *Alexander*, which was giuen him of *Aſinius Pollio*, whom he blameth for the vnſtedfaſtnes of his witt and wandering appetite, in refuſing the freendly counſayle which he vſed to giue him.

THat Sheepheard Corydon did burne in loue with Alexis,
All his maſters deare: and nought had he whereby to hope
Onely in beechen groues, and doleſome ſhaddowy places. [for.
Dailie reſorted he: there theſe rude diſordered outcryes,
Hylles and deſert woodes throughout thus mournfully tuned.
O hard harted Alex, haſt thou no regard to my ſweete ſong?
Pyttieſt me not a whitt: yea makſt me now that I ſhall dye.
Yet doo the beaſtes find out fine ſhades and trim pretty coole plottes,
And fro the ſun beames ſafe lie lyzardes vnder a buſhtuſte:
And for workmen toughe with boyling heate ſo beparched,
Garlick ſauery ſweete and coole hearbes plenty be dreſſed.
But, by the ſcorcht banke ſydes i' thy foote ſteppes ſtil I goe plodding.

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Hedgerowes hott doo reſound with Graſhops mournfully ſqueak-
O had I not ben better abyd Amarillis her anger? [ing,
And her proude diſdaine? yea better abyde my Menalcas?
What though brown did he ſeeme? yea what though thou be
ſo gallant
O thou fine chery cheekt child truſt not t' much to thy beauty.
Black violetts are tooke when dayſes white be refuſed.
Me thou doſt deſpiſe vnknowne to thy ſelfe yet Alexis:
What be my riches greate in neate, in milke what aboundance.
In Sicill hylles be my Lambes of which there wander a thouſand.
All times, colde and hote yet freſh milke neuer I wanted.
Such be my Muſicke notes, as (when his flockes he recalling)
Amphion of Dirce did vſe on ſhore Aracynthus.
Much miſhapt I am not, for late in a bancke I behelde me,
VVhen ſtill ſeas were calme, to thy Daphnis neede not I giue
place
No, though thou be the iudge, if pictures haue any credite.
O were thou content to remaine with me by the downes heere,
In theſe lodgings ſmall, and helpe me proppes to put vnder,
And trym kydling flocke with me to driue to the greene fieldes:
Pan in ſinging ſweete with me ſhouldſt brauely reſemble:
Pan, was firſt the inuenter, pypes to adioyne in an order:
Pan, poore flockes and Sheepheardes to moſt duly regardeth.
Thoſe fine lips thou needſt not feare to bruſe with a ſweete pype:
VVhat dyd Amynt forſake i'this excerciſe to be cunning?
One pype with ſeauene ſundry ſtops matcht ſweetly together.
Haue I my ſelfe, Damætas which ats death he bequeathd me,
And ſayd, heere, thou art now the ſecond which euer hath ought
So ſayd Damætas: but Amyntas ſpightfully ſcornde it. [it.
Alſo, two pretty ſmall wyld kyddes, moſt goodlie beſpotted
Haue I, that heere i' the dales doo runne skant ſafe I doo
feare me.
Twyce in a day two teates they ſuck: for thee will I keepe them:
Wondrous faine to haue had them both was Theſtylis of late.
And ſo ſhe ſhall: for I ſee thou ſcornſt whatſo-euer I giue thee.
Come hyther O thou ſweete face boy: ſee ſee, to thy ſelfe heere
How fayre Nymphes in baskets full doo bring manie Lillies:
White violets ſweete Nais plucks and bloomes fro the Poppies,
Narcyſs, and dyll flowres moſt ſweete that ſauoureth alſo.

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Caſia, broade mary Goldes, with pancyes, and Hyacinthus.
And I my ſelfe rype peaches ſoft as ſilke will I gather.
And ſuch Cheſnutts as Amarill was wont to reioyce at.
Ploms wyll I bring likewiſe: that fruite ſhall be honored alſo.
And ye O Lawrell twygges that I croppe, and myrte thy ſelfe next.
For ye be wont, (bound both in a bunch) moſt ſweetely to ſauour.
Thou art but a Clowne Corydon: theſe gifts eſteemes not Alexis:
Nor by thy gifts to obtaine art meete to incounter Iolas.
VVretch (ahlas) whats this that I wiſh? ſouth blaſts to the yong flowers
Or cleere cryſtall ſtreames with loathſome ſwyne to be troubled.
Ah mad boy from whom dooſt runne? why Gods ithe woods dwelt:
And Paris erſt of Troy: Pallas moſt gladly reioyſeth,
In theſe bowres: and in trym groues we all chiefely delight vs.
Grym Lyoneſſe doth courſe curſt woolues, ſo wolues doo the kydlinges.
And theſe wanton Kyddes likewiſe theſe faire Cytiſus flowers.
Thee Corydon (O Alex) ſome pleaſure euery wight pulles.
See theſe yoked ſteeres fro the plough nowe ſeeme to be lett looſe.
And theſe ſhadowes large doo declare thys ſun to depart hence
Styll I doo burne in loue. What meane in loue to be lookt for?
Ah Corydon Corydon, what raging fury dooth haunt thee,
Halfe cropt downe be thy vynes and broade brauncht elmes ouerhang them.
Rather about ſome needefull worke now buſy thy ſelfe well,
Either on Oſyers tuffe or bulruſh weaue pretty basketts.
And if Alexis ſcorne thee ſtill, mayſt hope for another.

FINIS.

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I durſt not enterpryſe to goe any further with this rude tranſlation: beeing for the reſpects aforeſayd a troubleſome and vnpleaſant peece of labour: And therefore theſe ſhall ſuffice till further occaſion ſhall ſerue to imploy ſome profitable paynes in this behalfe.

The next verſe in dignity to the *Hexameters*, is ye *Carmen Elegiacum* which conſiſteth of foure feete and two od ſillables: viz: the two firſt feete, eyther *Dactyli* or *Spondæi* indifferent, the one long ſillable: next two *Dactyli* and an other long ſillable – – – ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ſome doo meaſure it in this ſorte (and more truely yet not ſo readily to all) accounting firſt two indifferently either *Dactyli* or *Spondæi*, then one *Spondæi*, and two *Anapæſti*. But it commeth all to one reckoning. Thys verſe is alwayes vnſeperably adioyned vnto the Hexameter, and ſerueth eſpecially to the handling of loue and dalliances, whereof it taketh the name. It will not frame altogether ſo currantlye in our Engliſh as the other, becauſe the ſhortneſſe of the ſeconde *Penthimimer* will hardly be framed to fall together in good ſence, after the Latine rules. I haue not ſeene very many of them made by any, and therefore one or two for example ſake ſhall be ſufficient.

This *Diſtichon* out of *Ouid.*

Ingenium quondam fuerat pretioſius auro,
At nunc barbaries grandis habere nihil.

May thus be tranſlated.

Learning once was thought to be better then any gold was,
Now he that hath not wealth is but a barbarian.

And thys

Omnia ſunt hominum tenui pendentia filo:
Et ſubito caſu quæ valuere ruunt.

Tis but a ſlender thread, which all mens ſtates do depend on:
And moſt goodly thinges quickly doo fall to decay.

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As for the verſes *Phalocium* and *Iambicum*, I haue not as yet made any tryall in them: but the *Sapphic* I aſſure you, in my iudgment wyl doo very pretty, if ye wants which I ſpeake were once ſupplied. For tryall of which I haue turned the new Poets ſweete ſong of *Eliza* into ſuch homely *Sapphick* as I coulde.

Thys verſe conſiſteth of theſe fiue feete, one *Chore*, one *ſpondæ*, one *dactyl*, and two *Choreis*, with this addition, that after euery third verſe be ſette one *Adonium* verſe, which conſiſteth of a *dactyl* and a *ſpondæ*. It is more troubleſome and tedious to frame in our ſpeeche by reaſon they runne without difference, euery verſe being a like in quantity throughout, yet in my iudgement ſtandeth meetely well in the ſame. I pray looke the Coppy which I haue tranſlated in the fourth *Æglogue* of the *Sheepheardes Calender*: ye ſong of *Colins* making which *Hobbinoll* ſingeth in prayſe of the Queenes maieſty, vnder the name of *Eliza*.

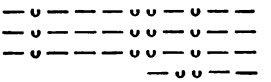
YE dainty Nymphes that in this bleſſed brooke,
doo bathe your breſt:
Forſake your watry bowres and hether looke,
at my requeſt:
And onely you Virgins that on *Parnaſs* dwell.
Whence floweth *Helicon* the learned well,
helpe me to blaſe
her worthy praiſe
That in her ſex doth all excell.

Of fayre *Eliza* be your ſiluer ſong
that bleſſed wight:
The flowre of Virgins, may ſhe flouriſh long,
in princely plight.
For ſhe is *Syrinx* daughter without ſpott,
Which *Pan* the Sheepheards God on her begot:
ſo ſprang her grace,
of heauenly race,
No mortall blemiſh may her blott.

See where ſhe ſittes, etc.

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The *Saphick* verſe.



O ye Nymphes moſt fine who reſort to this Irooke,
For to bathe there your pretty breaſts at all times:
Leaue the watriſh bowres, hyther and to me come
at my requeſt nowe.

And ye Virgins trymme who reſort to *Parnaſs*,
Whence the learned well *Helicon* beginneth:
Helpe to blaſe her worthy deſerts, that all els
mounteth aboue farre.

Nowe the ſiluer ſonges of *Eliza* ſing yee,
Princely wight whoſe peere not among the virgins
Can be found: that long ſhe may remaine among vs.
now let vs all pray.

For *Syrinx* daughter ſhe is, of her begotten
Of the great God *Pan*, thus of heauen aryſeth,
All her exlent race: any mortall harde happe
cannot aproche her.

See, ſhe ſittes moſt ſeemely in a graſſy greene plott,
Clothed in weedes meete for a princely mayden,
Boſte with Ermines white, in a goodly ſcarlett
brauely beſeeming.

Decked is that crowne that vpon her head ſtandes
With the red Roſe and many Daffadillies,
Bayes, the Primroſe and violetts, be ſette by: how
ioyfull a ſight iſt.

Say, behold did ye euer her Angelike face,
Like to *Phœbe* fayre? or her heauenly hauour
And the princelike grace that in her remaineth?
haue yee the like ſeene?

Medled iſt red roſe with a white together
Which in either cheeke do depeinct a trymme cheere,
Her maieſtie and eye to behold ſo comely, her
like who remembreth?

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Phœbus once peept foorth with a goodly guilt hewe,
For to gaze: but when he ſawe the bright beames
Spread abroade fro' her face with a glorious grace,
it did amaze him.

When another ſunne he behelde belowe heere,
Bluſht he red for ſhame, nor againe he durſt looke:
Would he durſt bright beames of his owne with hers match,
for to be vanquiſht.

Shew thy ſelfe now *Cynthia* with thy cleere rayes,
And behold her: neuer abaſht be thou ſo: [beauty, how
When ſhe ſpreades thoſe beames of her heauenly
thou art in a dump daſht?

But I will take heede that I match not her grace,
With the *Laton* ſeede, *Niobe* that once did,
Nowe ſhe doth therefore in a ſtone repent: to all
other a warning.

Pan he may well boaſte that he did begit her
Such a noble wight, to *Syrinx* is it ioy,
That ſhe found ſuch lott with a bellibone trym
for to be loaden.

When my younglinges firſt to the dammes doo bleat out,
Shall a milke white Lambe to my Lady be offred: [grome.
For my Goddeſſe ſhee is yea I my ſelfe her Heard-
though but a rude Clowne.

Vnto that place *Caliope* dooth high her,
Where my Goddeſſe ſhines: to the ſame the Muſer
After her with ſweete Violines about them
cheerefully tracing

Is not it Bay braunche that aloſt in handes they haue,
Eune to giue them ſure to my Lady *Eliza*:
O ſo ſweete they play—and to the ſame doo ſing too
heaunly to heare iſt.

See, the Graces trym to the ſtroake doo foote it,
Deftly dauncing, and meriment doo make them,
Sing to the inſtruments to reioyce the more, but
wants not a fourth grace?

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Then the daunce wyll be eune, to my Lady therefore
Shalbe geune that place, for a grace ſhe ſhall be
For to fill that place that among them in heaune, ſhe
may be receiued.

Thys beuy of bright Nymphes, whether iſt goe they now?
Raunged all thus fine in a rowe together?
They be Ladies all i' the Lake behight foe?
they thether all goe.

One that is there chiefe that among the reſt goes,
Called is *Chores* of Olyues ſhe beares a
Goodly Crownett, meete for a Prince that in peace
euer abideth.

All ye Sheepheardes maides that about the greene dwell,
Speede ye there to her grace, but among ye take heede
All be Virgins pure that aproche to deck her,
duetie requireth.

When ye ſhall preſent ye before her in place,
See ye not your ſelues doo demeane too rudely:
Bynd the fillets: and to be fine the waſte gyrt
faſt with a tawdryne

Bring the Pinckes therewith many Gelliflowres ſweete,
And the Cullambynes: let vs haue the Wyneſops,
With the Cornation that among the loue laddes
wontes to be worne much.

Daffadowndillies all a long the ground ſtrowe,
And the Cowſlyppe with a prety paunce let heere lye.
Kyngcuppe and Lillies ſo beloude of all men
And the deluce flowre.

One verſe there remaineth vntranſlated as yet, with ſome other of this ſorte, which I meant to haue finiſhed, but by reaſon of ſome let which I had, I am conſtrained to defer to ſome other time, when I hope to gratify the Readers with more and better verſes of this ſort: for in trueth I am perſwaded a little paine taking might furniſh our ſpeeche with as much pleaſaunt delight in this kinde of verſe, as any other whatſoeuer.

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Heere followe the Cannons or generall cautions of Poetry, preſcribed by Horace, firſt gathered by *Georgius Fabricius Cremnicenſis*: which I thought good to annex to thys Treatiſe, as very neceſſary obſeruations to be marked of all Poets.

In his Epiſtle ad Piſones de arte Poetica.

Irſt let the inuention be meete for the matter, not differing, or ſtraunge, or monſtrous. For a womans head, a horſe necke, the bodie of a dyuers coloured Byrd, and many members of ſundry creatures compact together, whoſe legges ending like a Fyſhes tayle: this in a picture is a wonderful deformitie: but if there be ſuch diuerſitye in the frame of a ſpeeche, what can be more vncomely or ilſauoured?

2. The ornaments or colours muſt not bee too many, nor raſhly aduentured on, neither muſt they be vſed euery where and thruſt into euery place.

3. The proprietie of ſpeeche muſt bee duely obſerued that wayghty and great matters be not ſpoken ſlenderly, or matters of length too briefly: for it belongeth much both to the comlineſſe and nature of a matter: that

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in big matters there be lykewiſe vſed boyſterous wordes.

4. In Poeticall deſcriptions, the ſpeeche muſt not exceede all credite, nor any thing fainedlie brought in, againſt all courſe of nature.

5. The diſpoſing of the worke muſt be ſuch, that there be no offence committed, as it were by too exquiſite dilligence: for many thinges may be oft committed, and ſome thing by too curious handling be made offenciue. Neyther is it in one part to be well furniſhed, and in another to be neglected. Which is prooued by example of a Caruer, who expreſſed very artificially the heade and vpper part of a body, but the reſt hee could not make an ende of. Againe, it is prooued thus, that a body ſhould not be in other partes beautifull, and yet bee deformed in the crooked noſe: for all the members in a well ſhapen bodie muſt be aunſwerable, ſound, and well proportioned.

6. He that taketh in hande to write any thing muſt firſt take heede that he be ſufficient for the ſame: for often vnwary fooles through their raſhnes are ouertooke with great want of ability

7. The ornament of a worke conſiſteth in wordes, and in the manner of the wordes, are either ſimple or mixt, newe or olde, propper or tranſlated. In them all good iudgment muſt be vſed and ready wytt. The chiefeſt grace is in the moſt frequented wordes, for the ſame reaſon holdeth in wordes, as doth in coynes, that the moſt vſed and tried are beſt eſteemed.

8. The kinde of verſe is to be conſidered and aptly applied to the argument, in what meaſure is moſt meete for euery ſort. The moſt vſuall kindes are foure, the *Heroic*, *Elegiac*, *Iambick*, and *Lyric*.

9. One muſt vſe one kynde of ſpeeche alike in all wrytings. Sometime the *Lyric* ryſeth aloft, ſometime the comicall. To the Tragicall wryters belong properly the bygge and boyſterous wordes. Examples muſt be interplaced according fitly to the time and place.

10. Regarde is to be had of affections: one thing

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becommeth pleaſant perſons, an other ſadde, an other wrathfull, an other gentle, which muſt all be heedefully reſpected, Three thinges therefore are requiſite in verſes, beauty, ſweetnes, and the affection. *Theophraſtus* ſayth that this beauty or delectableneſſe is a deceyt, and Ariſtotle calleth it τυραννία ολιγοκρονίον, a momentany tyrany. Sweetneſſe retayneth a Reader, affection moueth him.

11. Euery perſon muſt be fitted accordingly, and the ſpeeche well ordered: wherein are to be conſidered the dignity, age, ſex, fortune, condition, place, Country, etc. of eche perſon.

12. The perſonnes are eyther to be fayned by the Poets them ſelues, or borrowed of others, if he borrow them, then muſt hee obſerue το ὅμοιον, that is, that he folow that Author exactly whom he purpoſeth to immitate, and whereout he bringeth his examples. But if he fayne newe perſonnes, then muſt he keepe his το ὁμαλόν, that is equallie: ſo bringing them in eche place, that it be alwayes agreeable, and the laſt like vnto the firſt, and not make one perſon nowe a bolde boaſter, and the ſame ſtraightwaies a wiſe warie man, for that is paſſing abſurd. Againe, euery one muſt obſerue το ἁρμοστον, which is interpreted *conuenientiam*, fitneſſe: as it is meete and agreeable euery where, a man to be ſtoute, a woman fearefull, a ſeruant crafty, a young man gentle.

13. Matters which are common may be handled by a Poet as they may be thought propper to himſelfe alone. All matters of themſelues are open to be intreated of by any man: but if a thing be handled of ſome one in ſuch ſort, as he thereby obtaine great prayſe, he maketh it his owne or propper to himſelfe, as many did write of the Troiane war, but yet *Homer* made matter which was common to all, propper to himſelfe.

14. Where many thinges are to be taken out of auncienter tongues, as the Latines tooke much out of the Greekes, the wordes are not ſo preciſelie to be followed, but that they bee altered according to the iudg-

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ment and will of the Immitator, which precept is borrowed of Tully, *Non verbum verbo neceſſe est reddere.*

15. The beginning muſt not be fooliſhly handled, that is, ſtraungly or too long.

16. The propoſition or narration let it not be far fetched or vnlikely, and in the ſame forget not the differences of ages and perſons.

17. In a Comedie it is needfull to exhibite all the actions openlie, as ſuch as are cruell, vnhoneſt, or ougly, but ſuch thinges may better bee declared by ſome meete and handſome wordes, after what ſorte they are ſuppoſed to bee doone.

18. If a Commedye haue more Actes then fiue, it is tedious, if fewer, it is not ſufficient.

It fytteth not to bring in the perſonnes of Gods, but in verie great matters. *Cicero* ſayth, when the Tragedy wryters cannot bring theyr matters to good paſſe, they runne to God. Let not more perſonnes ſpeake together then foure for auoyding confuſion.

The *Chori* muſt be well garniſhed and ſette foorth: wherein eyther menne are admoniſhed, or reprehended, or counſayled vnto vertue. Such matter muſt bee choſen for the *Chorus*, as may bee meete and agreeable to that which is in hand. As for inſtruments and ſinging, they are Reliques of olde ſimplicitye. For the Muſicke commonlye vſed at Theaters and the licencioufneſſe of theyr ſonges, which together wyth theyr wealth increaſed among the Romaines, is hurtfull to diſcipline and good manners.

19. In a *Satyr* the clowniſh company and rurall Gods, are brought in to temperate the Heauineſſe of Tragedies, wyth ſome myrth and paſtyme. In ieſting it muſt be obſerued that it bee not lacyuious or Rybaldlike, or ſlaunderous, which precept holdeth generallie in all ſortes of wrytynges.

In a *Satyr* greate heede is to be taken, of the place, of the day, and of the perſonnes: as of *Bacchus*, *Silenus*, or the *Satyres*. Againe of the vnmeetneſſe or inconuenience of the matter, and of the wordes that they be

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fitted according to the perſons: of *Decorum*, that he which repreſented ſome noble perſonage in the Tragedie, bee not ſome buſy foole in the *Satyr*: finallie of the hearers, leaſt they bee offended by myxing filthy matters with ieſtes, wanton toyes wyth vnhoneſt, or noyſome with merry thinges.

20. The feete are to be applied propper to euery kinde of verſe, and therin a Poet muſt not vſe too much licence or boldnes. The auncient writers in *Iambick* verſes vſed at firſt pure *Iambicks*: Afterwards *Spondæus* was admitted into *Locos impares*, but at laſt ſuch was the licentious cuſtome, that they woulde both *Spondæus* where they liſted, and other feete without regarde.

21. In compyling of verſes great care and circumſpection muſt be vſed.

Thoſe verſes which be made Extempore, are of no great eſtimation: thoſe which are vnartificiall, are vtterly repelled as too fooliſh. Though many doo lightlie regard our verſes, yet ought the Careleſneſſe of the hearers to bee no cauſe in vs of errour and negligence. Who deſireth to make any thing worthy to be heard of learned eares, let hym reade Greeke Authors heedefullie and continually.

22. Artes haue their increaſinges euen as other things, beeing naturall, ſo haue Tragedies which were firſt rudely inuented by *Theſpis*, at laſt were much adorned by *Æſchylus*: at the firſt they were practiſed in Villages of the Countrey, afterwardes brought to ſtages in great Citties.

23. Some Artes doo increaſe, ſome doo decay by a certayne naturall courſe. The olde manner of Commedies decayde, by reaſon of ſlaundering which therein they vſed againſt many, for which there was a penaltie appointed, leaſt their bitternes ſhould proceede too farre: In place of which among the Latines came the *Satyres*.

The auncient Authors of Comedies, were *Eupolis*, *Cratinus*, and *Ariſtophanes*, of the middle ſorte *Plato*

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Comicus, of the laſt kinde *Menander*, which continued and was accounted the moſt famous.

24. A Poet ſh ould not content himſelfe onely with others inuentions, but himſelfe alſo by ye example of old wryters ſholde bring ſomething of his owne induſtry, which may bee laudable. So did they which writte among the Latines the Comedies called *Togatæ*, whoſe arguments were taken from ye Greekes, and the other which wrytt the *Prætextatæ*, whereof the arguments were Latine.

25. Heedefulneſſe and good compoſition maketh a perfecte verſe, and that which is not ſo may be reprehended. The faculty of a goode witte exceedeth Arte.

26. A Poet that he may be perfect, hath neede to haue knowledge of that part of Philoſophy which informeth ye life to good manners. The other which pertaineth to naturall thinges, is leſſe plauſible, hath fewer ornaments, and is not ſo profitable.

27. A Poet to the knowledge of Philoſophie ſhoulde alſo adde greater experience, that he may know the faſhions of men and diſpoſitions of people. Thys profit is gott by trauelling, that whatſoeuer he wryteth he may ſo expreſſe and order it, that hys narration may be formable.

28. The ende of Poetry is to wryte pleaſant thinges, and profitable. Pleaſant it is which delighteth by beeing not too long, or vneaſy to be kept in memory, and which is ſomewhat likelie, and not altogether forged. Profitable it is, which ſtyrreth vppe the mindes to learning and wiſedome.

29. Certaine eſcapes are to be pardoned in ſome Poets, ſpecially in great workes. A faulte may bee committed either in reſpect of hys propper Arte, or in ſome other Arte: that a Poet ſhoulde erre in precepts of hys owne arte, is a ſhamefull thing, to committe a faulte in another Arte is to be borne withal: as in *Virgil*, who ſayneth that *Æneas* comming into *Affrica* ſlew with hys darte certaine Stagges, whereas

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indeede *Affrica* hath in it none of thoſe beaſtes. Such errours doo happen eyther by vnheedefulnes, when one eſcapeth them by negligence: or by the common fragility of man, becauſe none there is which can know all thinges. Therefore this laſt kinde of errour is not to be ſtucke vppon.

30. A good Poet ſhould haue reſpect to thys, how to retaine hys Reader or hearer. In a picture ſome thing delighteth beeing ſette farre of, ſomething nearer, but a Poet ſhould delight in all places as well in ſunne as ſhaddowe.

31. In a Poet is no meane to be admitted, which if hee bee not he of all is the worſt of all.

32. A Poeme if it runne not ſweetely and ſmoothly is odious: which is proued by a *ſimile* of the two ſenſes, hearing and taſting, as in ſweete and pleaſaunt meates. And the Poem muſt bee of that ſorte, that for the ſweeteneſſe of it may bee acceptable and continue like it ſelfe vnto the ende, leaſt it wearye or driue away a Reader.

33. He that would wryte any thing worthy the poſteritye, let him not enterpriſe any thing wherevnto his nature is not agreeable. *Mercury* is not made of wood (as they ſay) neyther doth *Minerua* fauour all ſtudies in euery one. In all Artes nature is the beſt helpe, and learned men vſe commonly to ſay that *A Poet is as well borne as made a Poet.*

34. Let no man eſteeme himſelfe ſo learned, but that he may ſubmytte hys wrytinges to the iudgments of others, and correct and throughly amend the ſame himſelfe.

35. The profitte of Poetry ſprang thus, for that the auncient wyſe men ſet downe the beſt things that pertained to mans life, manners, or felicity, and examining and prooving the ſame by long experience of time, when they are aged they publiſhed them in wrytinges. The vſe of Poetry what it was at the firſt, is manifeſt by the examples of the moſte learned men: as of *Orpheus* who firſt builded houſes: of *Amphion* who

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made Cities, of *Tyrtæus* who firſt made warre: of *Homer*, who wryt moſt wyſely.

36. In an artificiall Poet three thinges are requiſite, nature, Arte, and dilligence.

37. A wryter muſt learne of the learned, and he muſt not ſticke to confeſſe when he erreth: that the worſe he may learne to auoyde, and knowe howe to follow the better.

The confeſſion of an errour betoken a noble and a gentle minde. *Celſus* and *Quintillian* doo report of *Hippocrates*, that leaſt he ſhould deceiue his poſterity, he confeſſed certayne errours, as it well became an excellent minded man, and one of great credite. For (as ſayth *Celſus*) light witts becauſe they haue nothing, wyll haue nothing taken from them.

38. In making choiſe of ſuch freendes as ſhould tell vs the trueth, and correct our wrytinges, heedefull iudgment muſt bee vſed: leaſt eyther we chooſe vnſkylfull folke, or flatterers, or diſſemblers. The vnſkilfull know not how to iudge, flatterers feare to offende, diſſemblers in not prayſing doo ſeeme to commende.

39. Let no man deceiue himſelfe, or ſuffer himſelfe to be deceiued, but take ſome graue learned man to be iudge of his dooing, and let him according to hys counſayle change and put out what hee thinketh good.

40. He which will not flatter and is of ability to iudge, let him endeuour to nothing ſo much, as to the correction of that which is wrytten, and that let be doone with earneſt and exquiſite iudgment. He which dooth not thus, but offendeth wilfully in breaking his credite too raſhly, may be counted for a madde, furious, and franticke foole.

41. The faultes commonly in verſes are ſeauen, as either they be deſtitute of Arte, of facility, or ornament: or els, they be ſuperfluous, obſcure, ambicious, or needeleſſe.

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Out of the Epiſtles ad Mecœnatem, Auguſtum, et Florum.

42. An immitation ſhould not be too ſeruile or ſuperſtitious, as though one durſt not varry one iotte from the example: neyther ſhould it be ſo ſenceleſſe or vnſkilfull, as to immitate thinges which are abſurde, and not to be followed.

43. One ſhould not altogether treade in the ſteppes of others, but ſometime he may enter into ſuch wayes as haue not beene haunted or vſed of others. *Horace* borrowed ye *Iambick* verſe of *Archilocus*, expreſſing fully his numbers and elegant[l]y, but his vnſeemely wordes and pratling tauntes hee moſte wyſhlye ſhunned.

44. In our verſes we ſhould not gape after the phraſes of the ſimpler ſorte, but ſtriue to haue our writings allowable in the iudgments of learned menne.

45. The common peoples iudgments of Poets is ſeldome true, and therefore not to be ſought after. The vulgar ſort in *Rome* iudged *Pacuuious* to be very learned, *Accius* to bee a graue wryter, that *Affranius* followed *Menander*, *Plautus*, *Epicharmus*: that *Terence* excelled in Arte *Cæcilius* in grauity: but the learned ſorte were not of this opinion. There is extant in *Macrobius* (I knowe not whether *Angellius*) the like verdite concerning them which wryt *Epigrammes*. That *Catullus* and *Caluus* wrytt fewe thinges that were good, *Nœuius* obſcure, *Hortenſius* vncomely, *Cynna* vnpleaſant, and *Memmius* rough.

46. The olde wryters are ſo farre to be commended, as nothing be taken from the newe: neyther may we thinke but that the way lyeth open ſtyll to others to

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attaine to as great matters. Full well ſayd *Sidonius* to *Eucherius*, I reuerence the olde wryters, yet not ſo as though I leſſe eſteemed the vertues and deſertes of the wryters in this age.

47. Newnes is gratefull if it be learned: for certaine it is, Artes are not bothe begunne and perfected at once, but are increaſed by time and ſtudie. which notwithſtanding when they are at the full perfection, doo debate and decreaſe againe.

Cic. de orat. There is nothing in the world which burſteth out all at once, and commeth to light all wholly together.

48. No man ſhould dare to practiſe an Arte that is daungerous, eſpecially before he haue learned the ſame perfectly: ſo doo guyders of Shyppes: ſo doo Phiſitions: but ſo did not manie Romaine Poets (yea ſo doo not too many Engliſh wryters) who in a certaine corragious heate gaped after glory by wryting verſes, but ſewe of them obtayned it.

49. A Poet ſhould be no leſſe ſkylfull in dealing with the affectes of the mynde, then a tumbler or a Iuggler ſhoulde bee ready in his Arte. And with ſuch pyth ſhoulde he ſette foorth hys matters, that a Reader ſhoulde ſeeme not onely to heare the thing, but to ſee and be preſent at the dooing thereof. Which faculty *Fabius* calleth *ὑποτασιν* and *Ariſtotle προ ομματον θεσιν ἡ ποιησιμ.*

50. Poets are either ſuch as deſire to be liked of on ſtages, as Commedie and Tragedie wryters: or ſuch as woulde bee regeſtred in Libraries. Thoſe on ſtages haue ſpeciall reſpect to the motions of the minde, that they may ſtirre bothe the eyes and eares of their beholders. But the other which ſeeke to pleaſe priuately with[in] the walles, take good aduiſement in their workes, that they may ſatiſfy the exact iudgments of learned men in their ſtudies.

51. A Poet ſhoulde not bee too importunate, as to offende in vnſeaſonable ſpeeches: or vngentle, as to contemne the admonitions of others: or ambicious, as

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to thinke too well of his owne dooinges: or too wayward, as to thinke, reward enough cannot be gyuen him for his deſerte, or finally too proude, as to deſyre to be honoured aboue meaſure.

52. The emendations of Poemes be very neceſſary, that in the obſcure poyntes many thinges may be enlightned, in the baſer partes many thinges may be throughly garniſhed. Hee may take away and put out all vnpropper and vnſeemely words, he may with diſcretion immitate the auncient wryters, he may abridge thinges that are too lofty, mittigate thynges that are too rough, and may vſe all remedies of ſpeeche throughout the whole worke. The thinges which are ſcarce ſeemely, he may amende by Arte and methode.

53. Let a Poet firſt take vppon him, as though he were to play but an Actors part, as he may bee eſteemed like one which wryteth without regarde, neyther let him ſo polliſh his works, but that euery one for the baſeneſſe thereof, may think to make as good. Hee may likewyſe exerciſe the part of geſturer, as though he ſeemed to meddle in rude and common matters, and yet not ſo deale in them, as it were for variety ſake, nor as though he had laboured them thoroughly but tryfled with them, nor as though he had ſweat for them, but practiſed a little. For ſo to hyde ones cunning, that nothing ſhould ſeeme to bee laborſome or exquiſite, when notwithſtanding, euery part is polliſhed with care and ſtudie, is a ſpeciall gyft which *Ariſtotle* calleth κρῆψν.

54. It is onely a poynt of wyſedome, to vſe many and choyſe elegant words, but to vnderſtand alſo and to ſet foorth thinges which pertaine to the happy ende of mans life. Wherevppon the Poet *Horace*, calleth the Arte poeticall, without the knowledge of learning and philoſophy, a *prating vanity*. Therfore a good and allowable Poet, muſt be adorned with wordes, plentious in ſentences, and if not equall to an Orator, yet very neere him, and a ſpecial louer of learned men.

FINIS.

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Epilogus.



His ſmall trauell (courteous Reader) I deſire thee take in good worth: which I haue compyled, not as an exquiſite cenſure concerning this matter, but (as thou mayſt well perceiue, and) in trueth to that onely ende that it might be an occaſion, to haue the ſame throughly and with greater diſcretion, taken in hande and laboured by ſome other of greater abilitie: of whom I knowe there be manie among the famous Poets in London, who bothe for learning and leyſure, may handle this Argument far more pythilie then my ſelfe. Which if any of them wyll vouchſafe to doo, I truſt wee ſhall haue Engliſhe Poetry at a higher price in ſhort ſpace: and the rabble of balde Rymes ſhall be turned to famous workes, comparable (I ſuppoſe) with the beſt workes of Poetry in other tongues. In the meane time, if my poore ſkill, can ſette the ſame any thing forwarde, I wyll not ceaſe to practiſe the ſame towardes the framing of ſome apt Engliſh *Proſodia:* ſtyll hoping, and hartelie wiſhing to enioy firſt the benefitte of ſome others iudgment, whoſe authority may beare greater credite, and whoſe learning can better performe it.

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